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AUTHOR	Howes, Janice
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ABSTRACT

The first of these two booklets illustrates the presenting of an elementary class play about the U.S. Constitution. It can be used to give young children some basic information about the U.S. Constitution or as a guideline for presenting a program about the U.S. Constitution. The story provides important information about the Constitutional Convention and highlights each of the seven Articles of the Constitution, the Bill or Rights, and the other 16 amendments. The second booklet contains a script that describes the writing of the U.S. Constitution and is designed for use with children in grades 1 to 5. The script can be used as a storytelling device or it can be acted out as a children's play. Props to be used with the story include: (1) seven Roman numerals to represent the seven Articles of the Constitution; (2) 26 Arabic numbers to represent the 26 amendments to the Constitution; (3) pictures of Washington, Lincoln, and Madison; (4) maps of the 13 original states; and (5) a U.S. flag. A diagram for setting up the classroom is included along with detailed instructions for carrying out the presentation. (SM)

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A Classroom Presents

THE CONSTITUTION of the UNITED STATES

A Story for Elementary School Children

Written and Illustrated by
Janice Howes, M.Ed.

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A CLASSROOM PRESENTS THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

A Story for Elementary School Children

Written and Illustrated by Janice Howes, M.Ed.

TEACHERS PUBLISHING HOUSE
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Walter E. Arms, Ph.D.
Elementary Education Dept.
University of Akron
Akron, Ohio

Loran Braught, Ph.D.
School of Education
Indiana State University

Guy Clifford, Ph.D.
History Department
Bridgewater State College
Boston, Massachusetts

James Dague, Ph.D.
Dept. of Education
John Carroll University
Cleveland, Ohio

Gloria Fimbres, Ph.D.
Teacher Education Program
University of California
San Diego, California

Arlene F. Gallagher, Ph.D.
School of Education
Boston University

Linda Gromer
Dir. of Instructional Media
Kentwood Public Schools
Kentwood, Michigan

William W. Joyce, Ph.D.
Professor of Education
Michigan State University

Ronald Kirkemo, Ph.D.
Professor, Political Science
Point Loma Nazarene College
San Diego, California

Kelly Koelker
Attorney
Atlanta, Georgia

Tarry L. Lindquist
Elementary Teacher
Mercer Island School District
Mercer Island, Washington

David Mancini, Ph.D.
Curriculum Director
Louisville Public Schools
Louisville, Ohio

James Martin
Social Studies Consultant
Stark County Dept. of Education
Louisville, Ohio

Maryanne Metcalfe, M.A., M.Ed.
English Department
Kent State University
Canton, Ohio

Karen O'Connor
Author
San Diego, California

Walter C. Parker, Ph.D.
College of Education
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington

Michael E. Parrish, Ph.D.
Dept. of History
University of California
San Diego, California

John Patrick, Ph.D.
Director, Soc. Studies Dev. Center
Indiana University

Richard C. Remy, Ph.D.
Director, Citizenship Dev. Program
Mershon Center
The Ohio State University

David E. Ross
History Teacher
Plain Local Schools
Canton, Ohio

Thomas D. Rowe, Jr.
Professor
Duke Law School
Durham, North Carolina

Jacquelyn Sato
Author
Kentwood, Michigan

Kenneth Smith
History Teacher
Louisville Public Schools
Louisville, Ohio

Kenneth Wulff, Ph.D.
Teacher Dev. and Curriculum Studies
Kent State University
Canton, Ohio

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This book is dedicated to the memory of my father
who was old enough, and wise enough,
to love freedom
more than any other person I know.

This book was written to serve a dual purpose. When used as a picture book, it gives the young child some basic information about our Constitution. It may also be used as a guideline for presenting your own program about the Constitution.

Permission granted for use of the song AMERICA, from BEST LOVED SONGS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, by Denes Agay, obtained from:
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Companion book also available:

MATERIALS FOR A CLASSROOM PRESENTATION OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

Script, Props, and Activities
For Elementary School Children
Written and Illustrated by Janice Howes, M.Ed.

Teachers Publishing House
P. O. Box 9358
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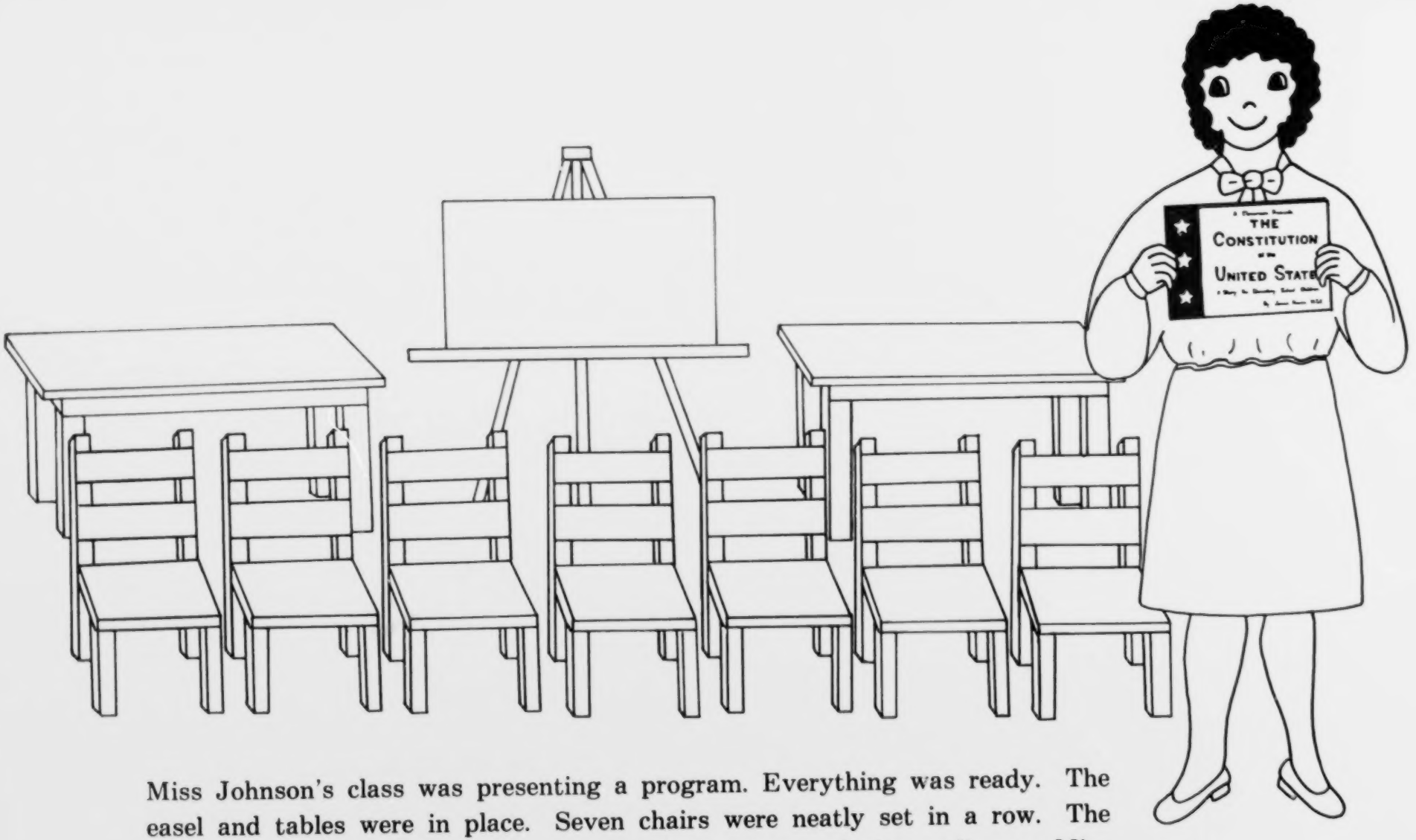
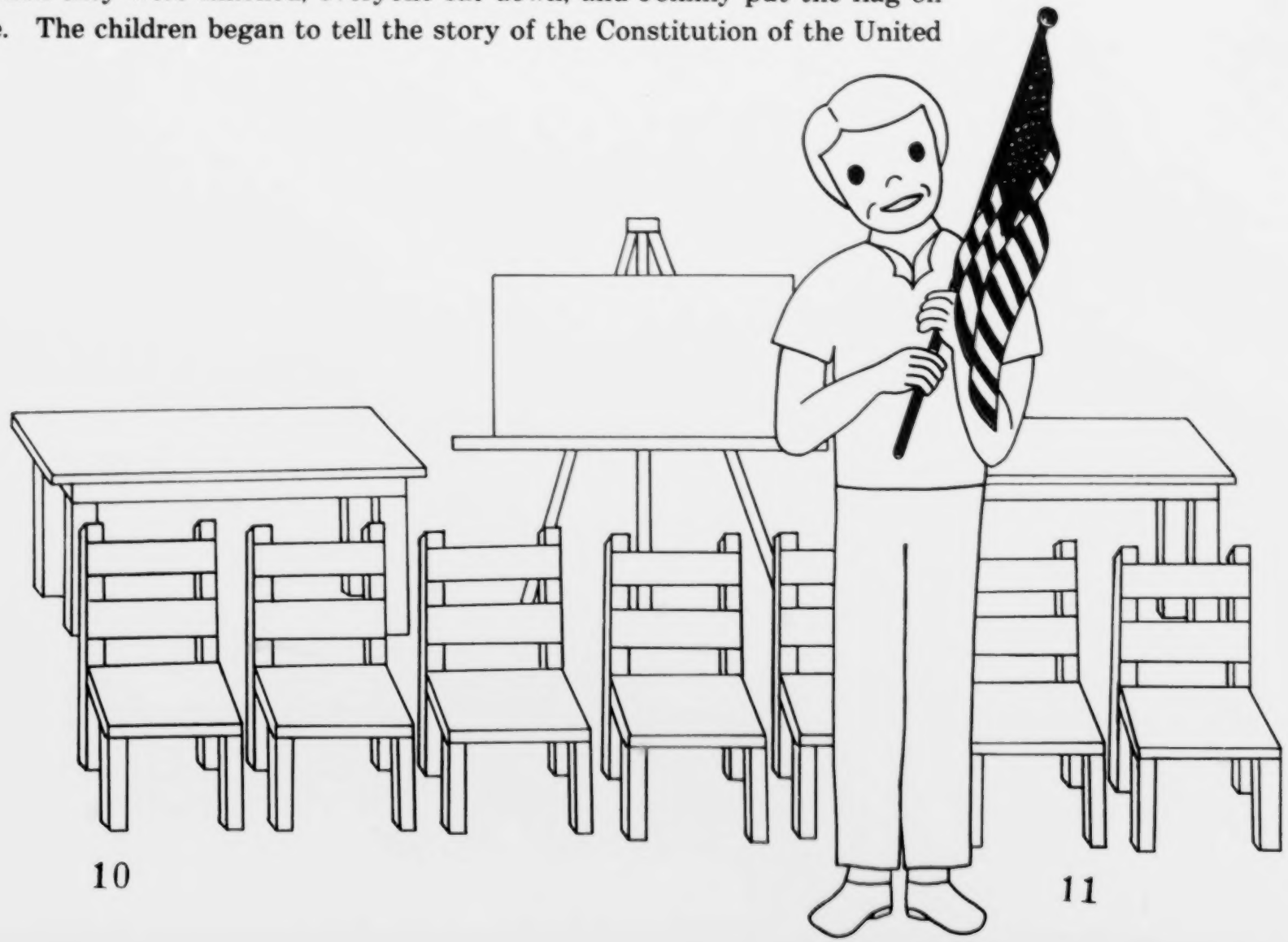


Miss Johnson's class was presenting a program. Everything was ready. The easel and tables were in place. Seven chairs were neatly set in a row. The children, quietly waiting, were seated in the front of the audience. Miss Johnson welcomed everyone to the program.

Johnny held the beautiful flag so that everyone could see it.

He said, "Will everyone please stand and say the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag."

When they were finished, everyone sat down, and Johnny put the flag on the table. The children began to tell the story of the Constitution of the United States.



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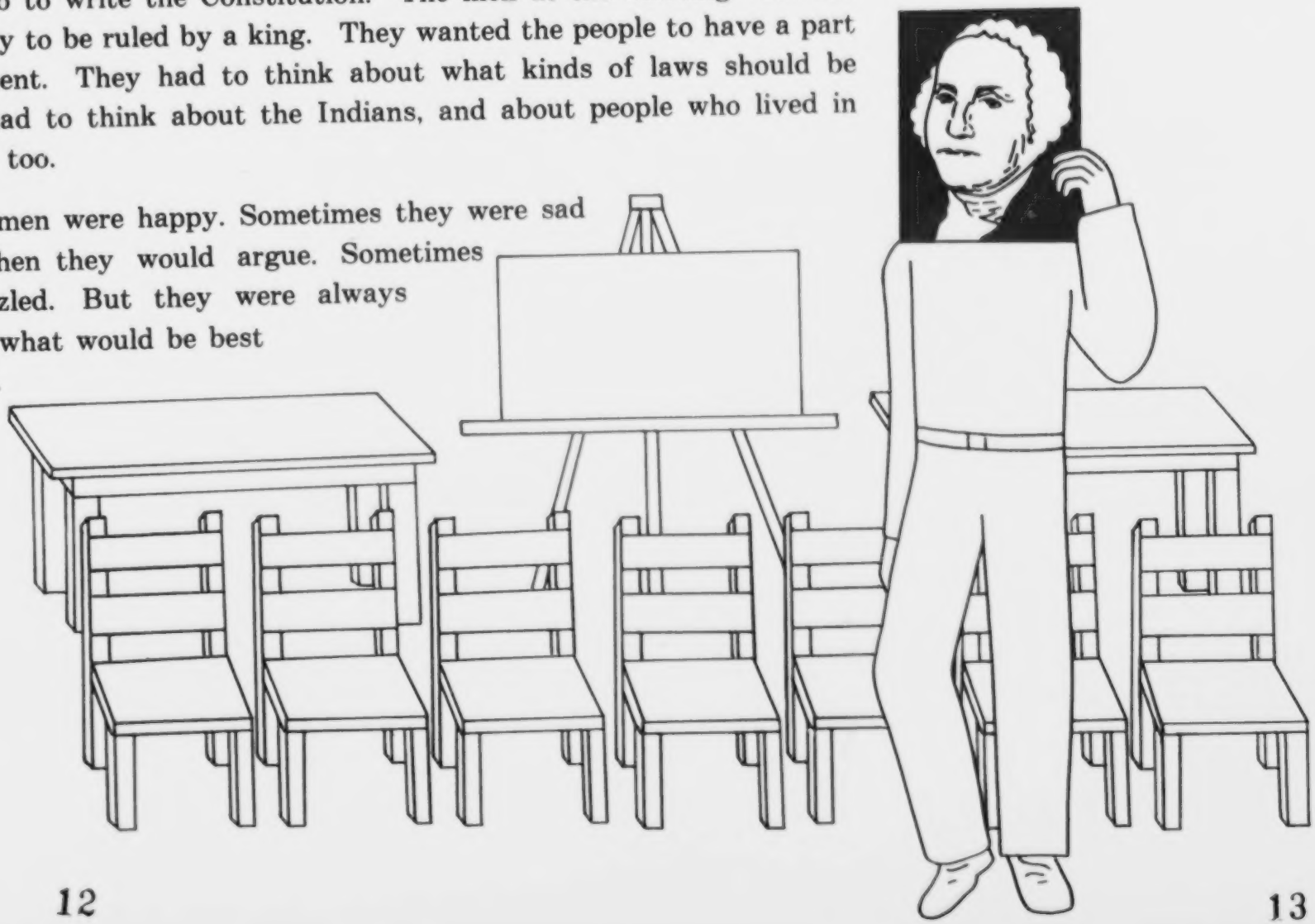
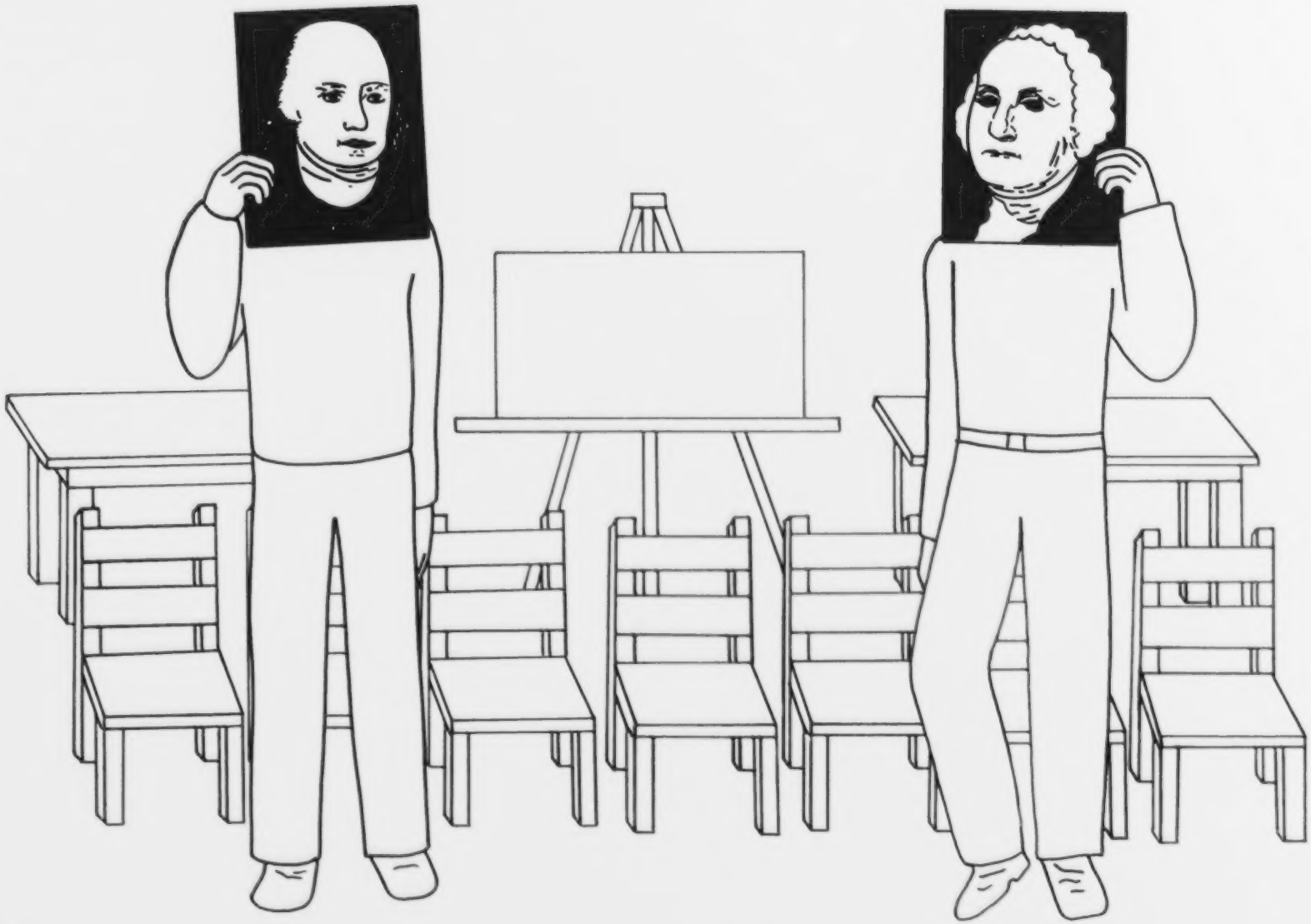
About two hundred years ago, fifty-five men met together in Philadelphia to talk about writing a plan for the government of our new country. They called this plan the Constitution of the United States. George Washington was the president of that important meeting.

It was a big job to write the Constitution. The men at the meeting did not want our country to be ruled by a king. They wanted the people to have a part in our government. They had to think about what kinds of laws should be written. They had to think about the Indians, and about people who lived in other countries, too.

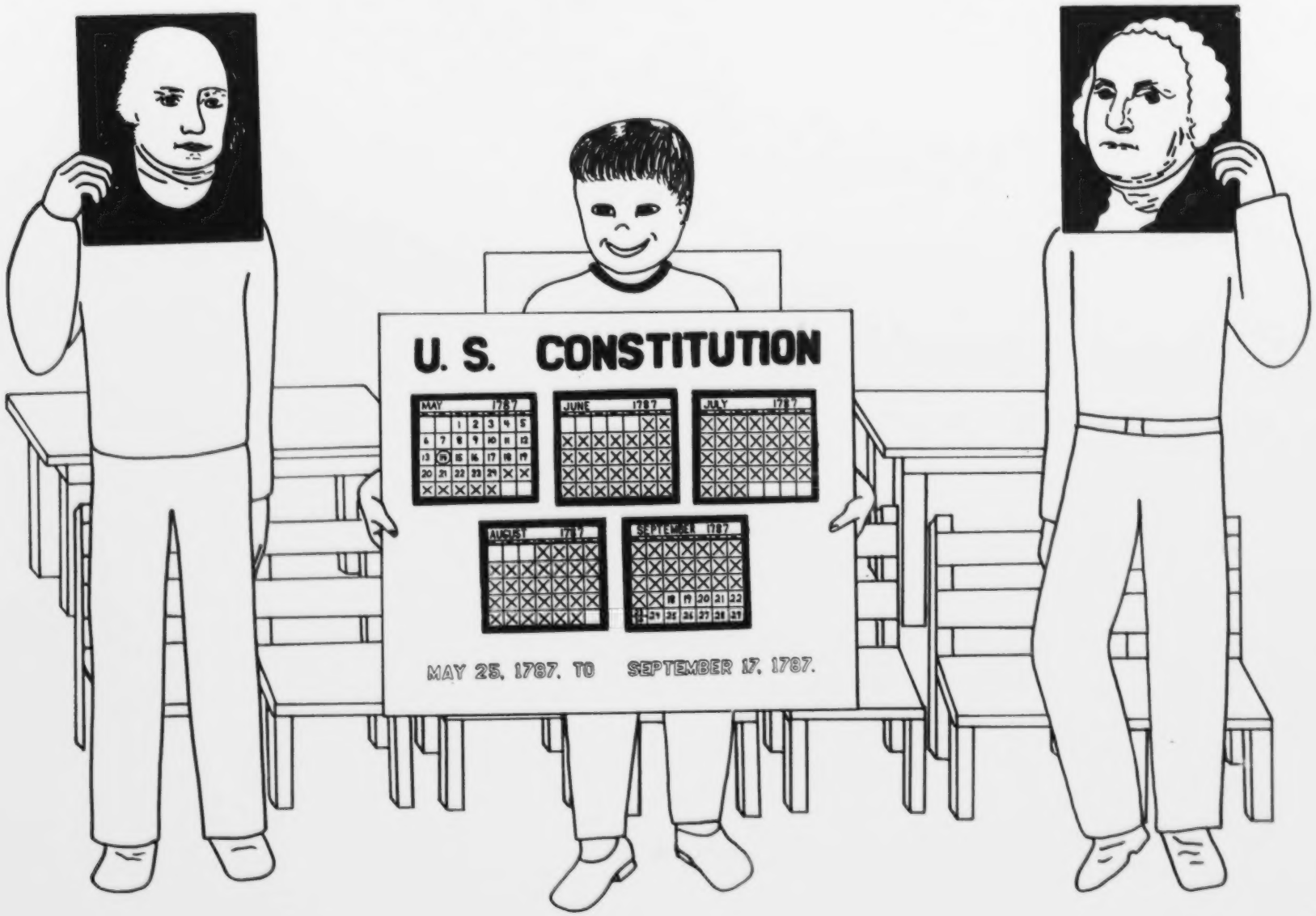
Sometimes the men were happy. Sometimes they were sad or angry, and then they would argue. Sometimes they were puzzled. But they were always thinking about what would be best for our country.

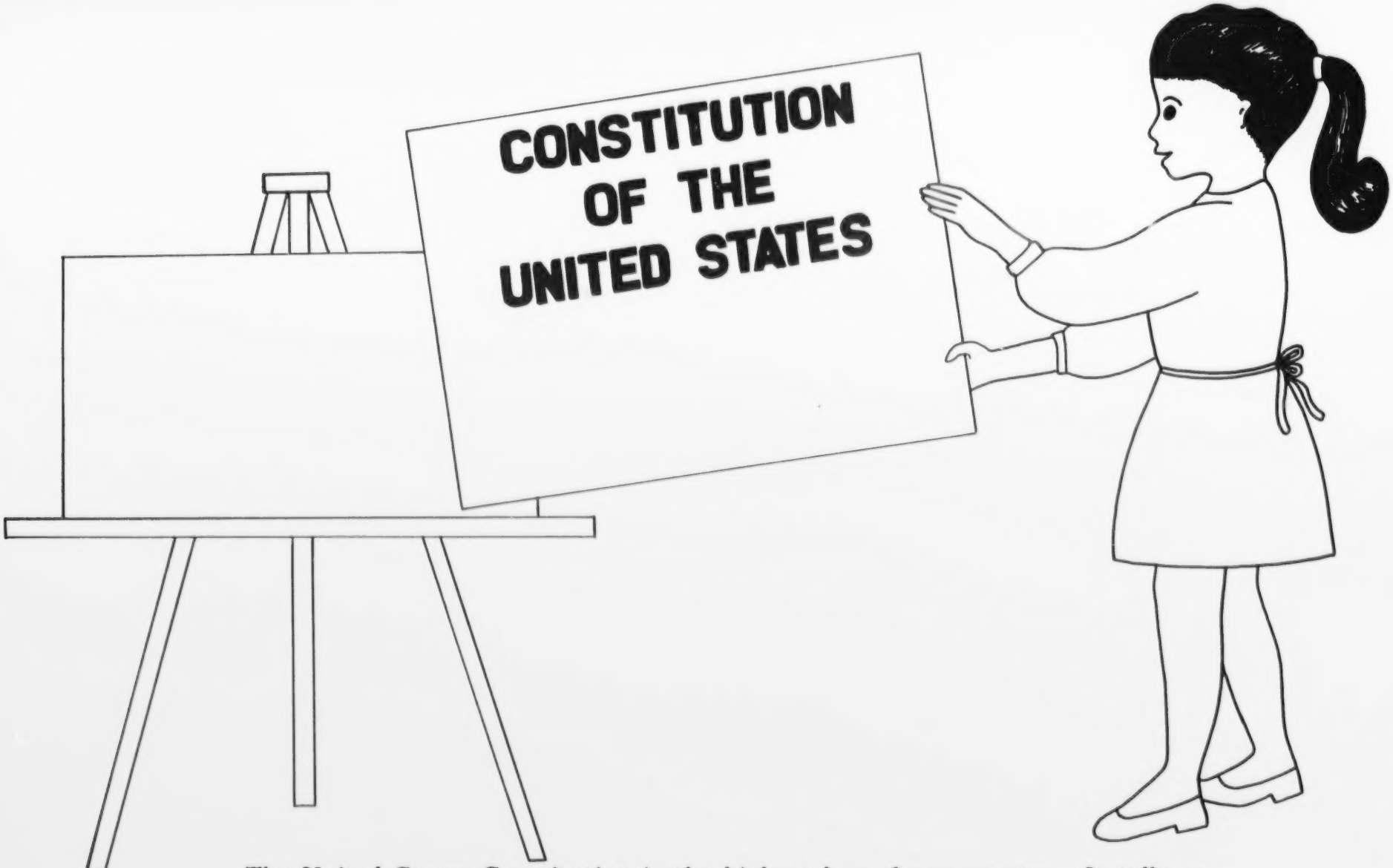


James Madison is often called the "Father of the Constitution". He did a lot of writing at the meeting.

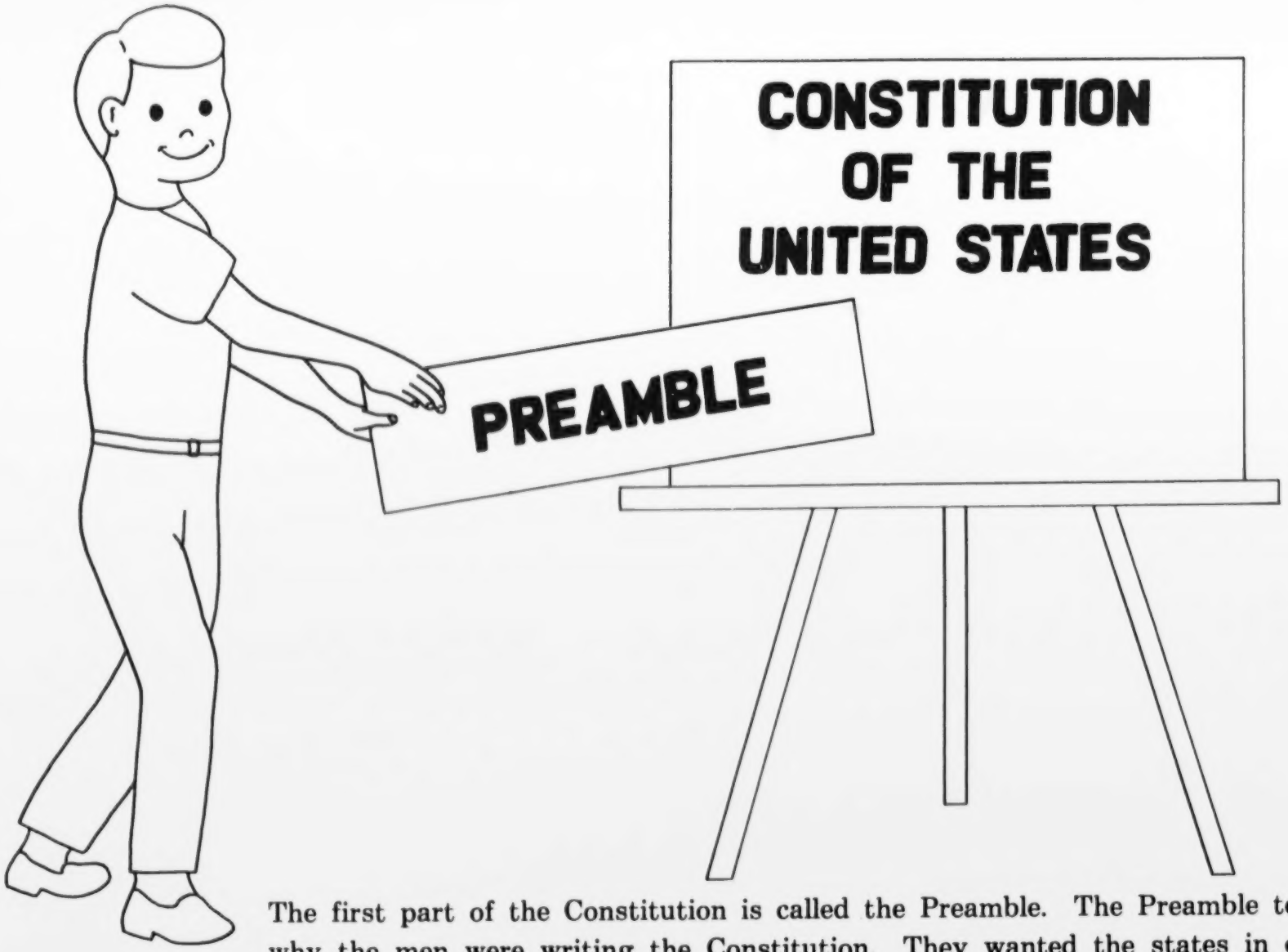


The fifty-five men who met together to write the Constitution came from many different states. It took them almost four months to write the Constitution.

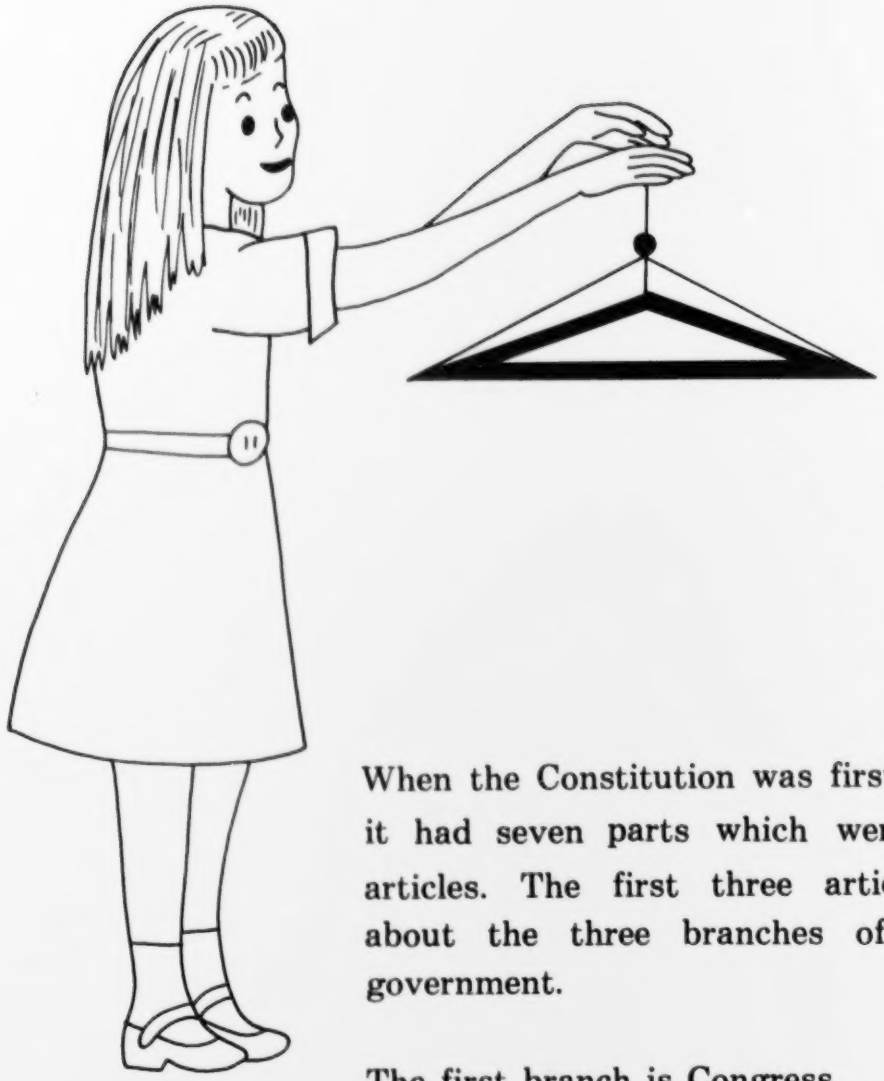




The United States Constitution is the highest law of our country. It tells us how to organize our federal government. The federal government is the government of our whole country. The Constitution tells what our federal government is allowed to do.

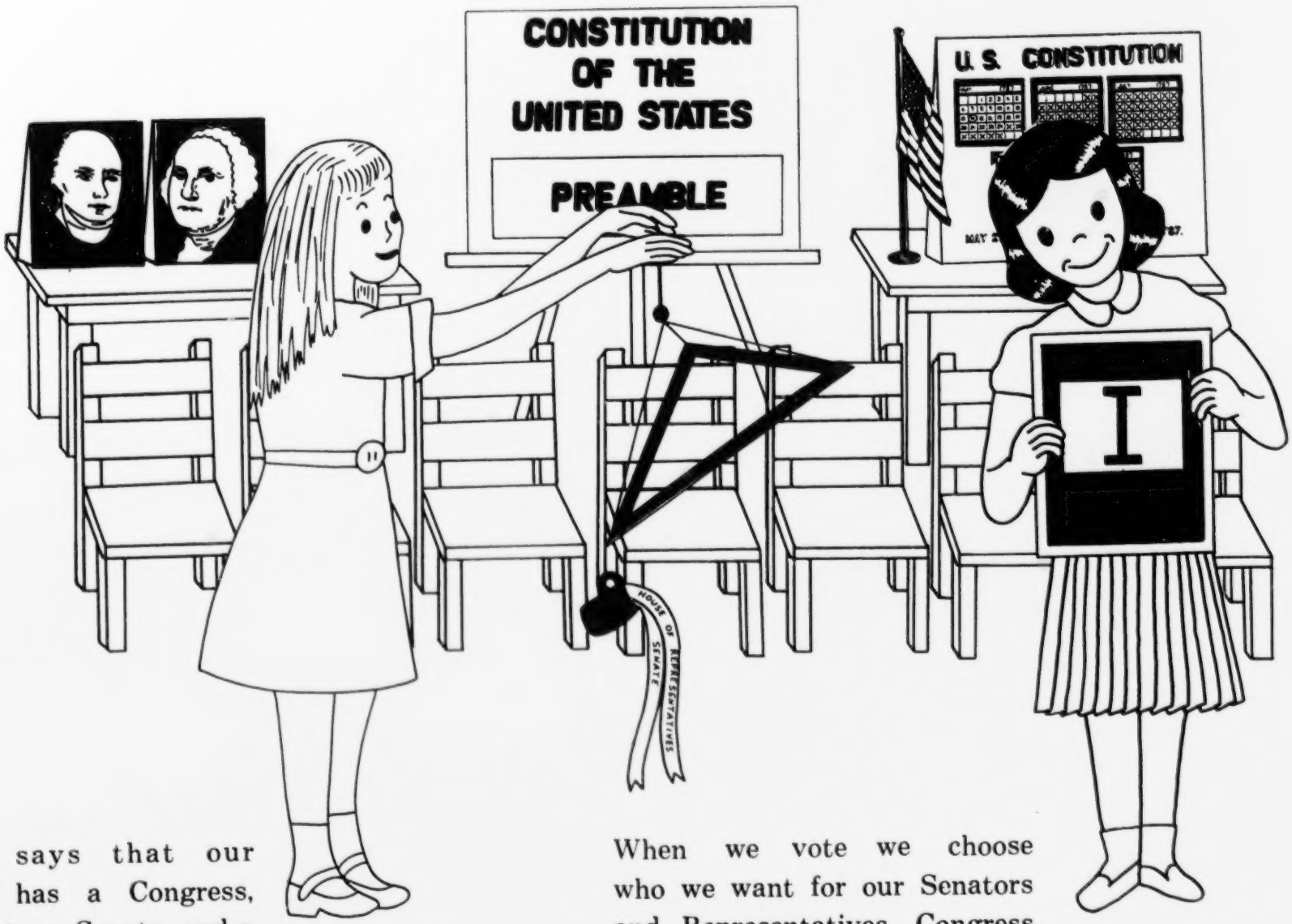


The first part of the Constitution is called the Preamble. The Preamble tells why the men were writing the Constitution. They wanted the states in our country to work together better. The Preamble says that they wanted our country to be a great place to live for a long, long time.



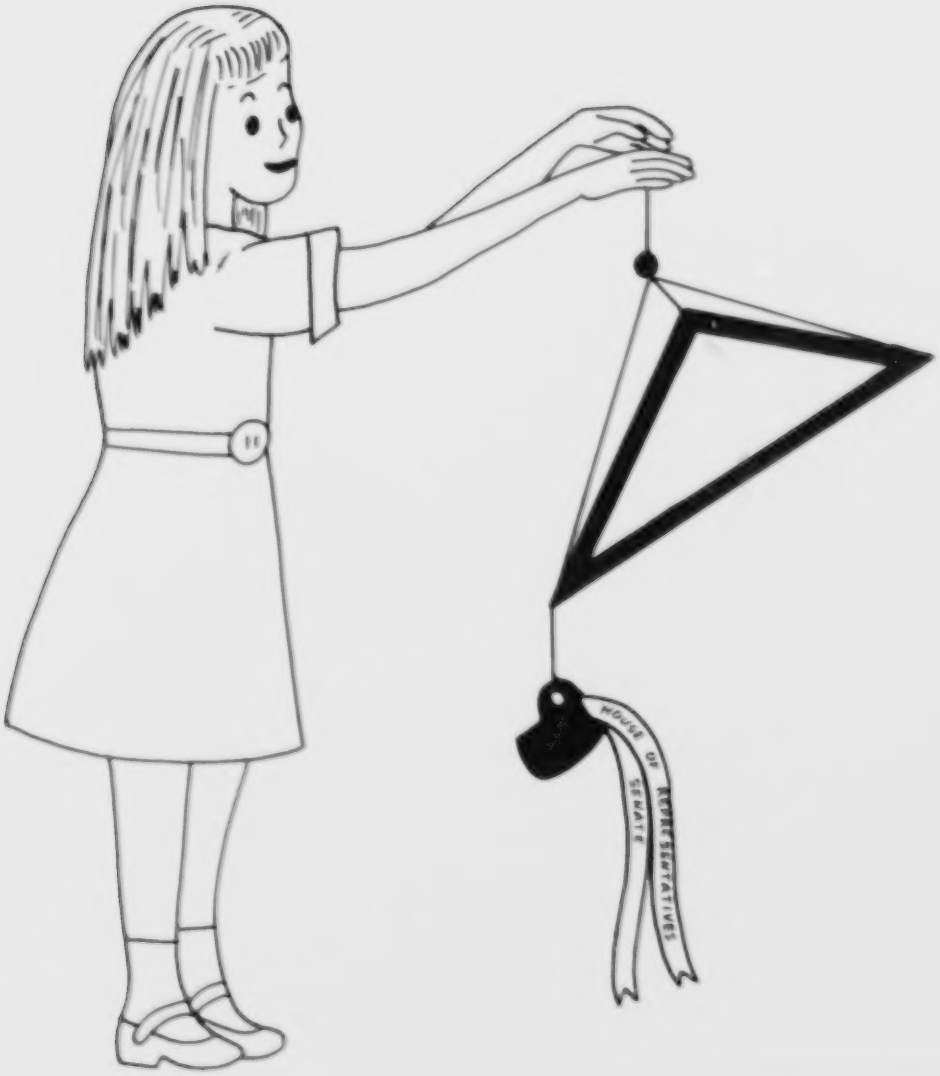
When the Constitution was first written it had seven parts which were called articles. The first three articles tell about the three branches of our government.

The first branch is Congress.



Article I says that our government has a Congress, with two parts, a Senate, and a House of Representatives.

When we vote we choose who we want for our Senators and Representatives. Congress makes the laws for our country.



The second branch is the President.

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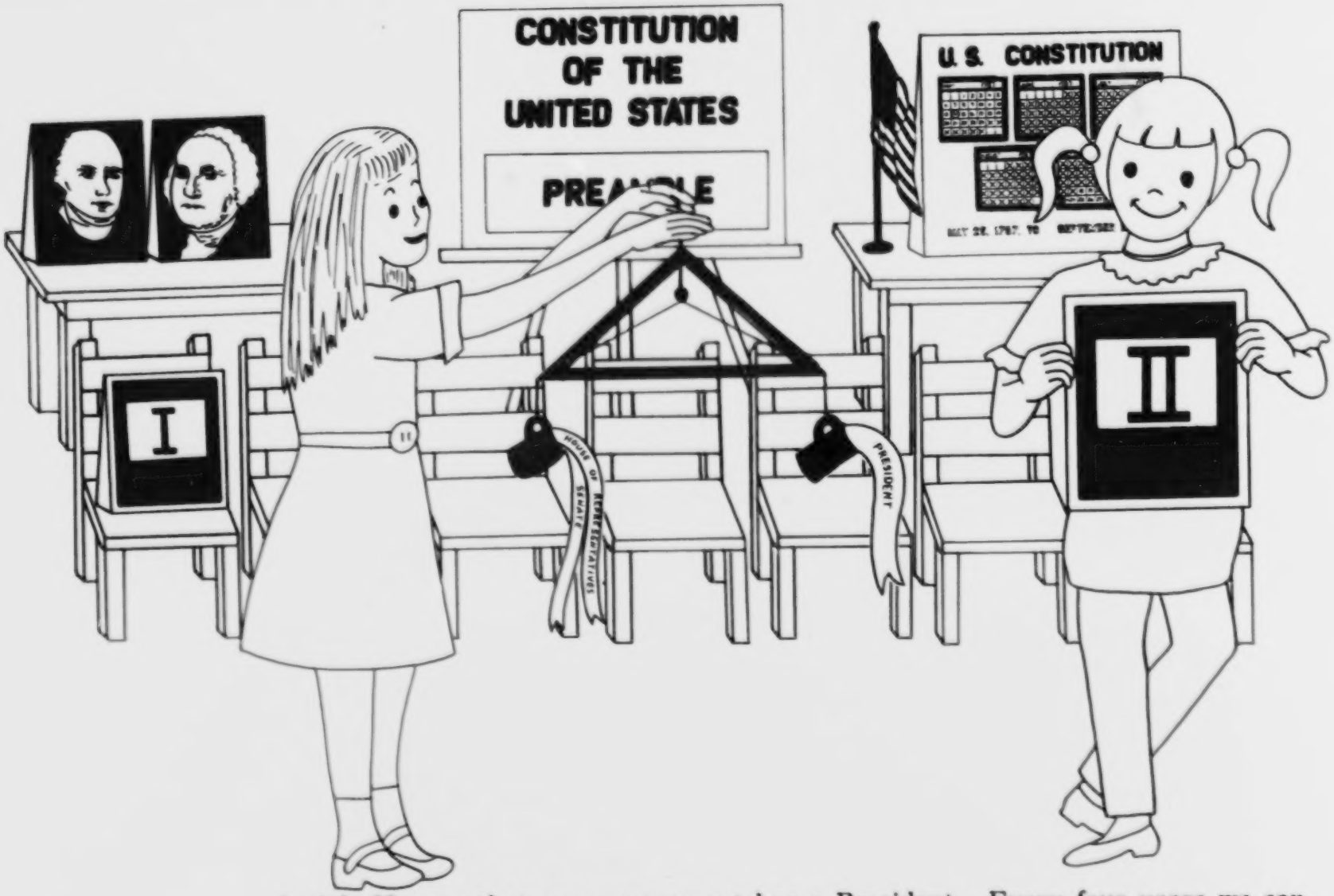
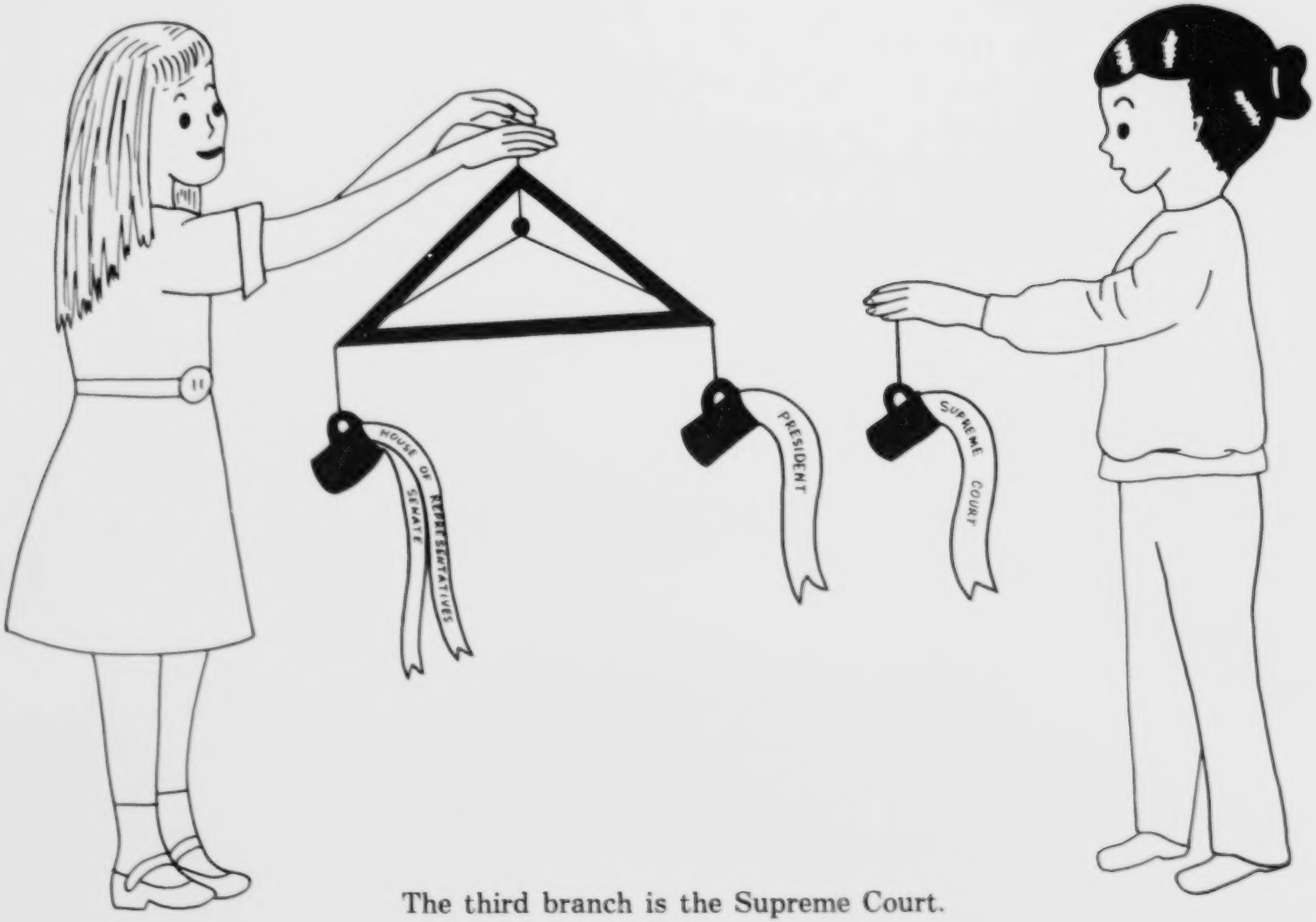
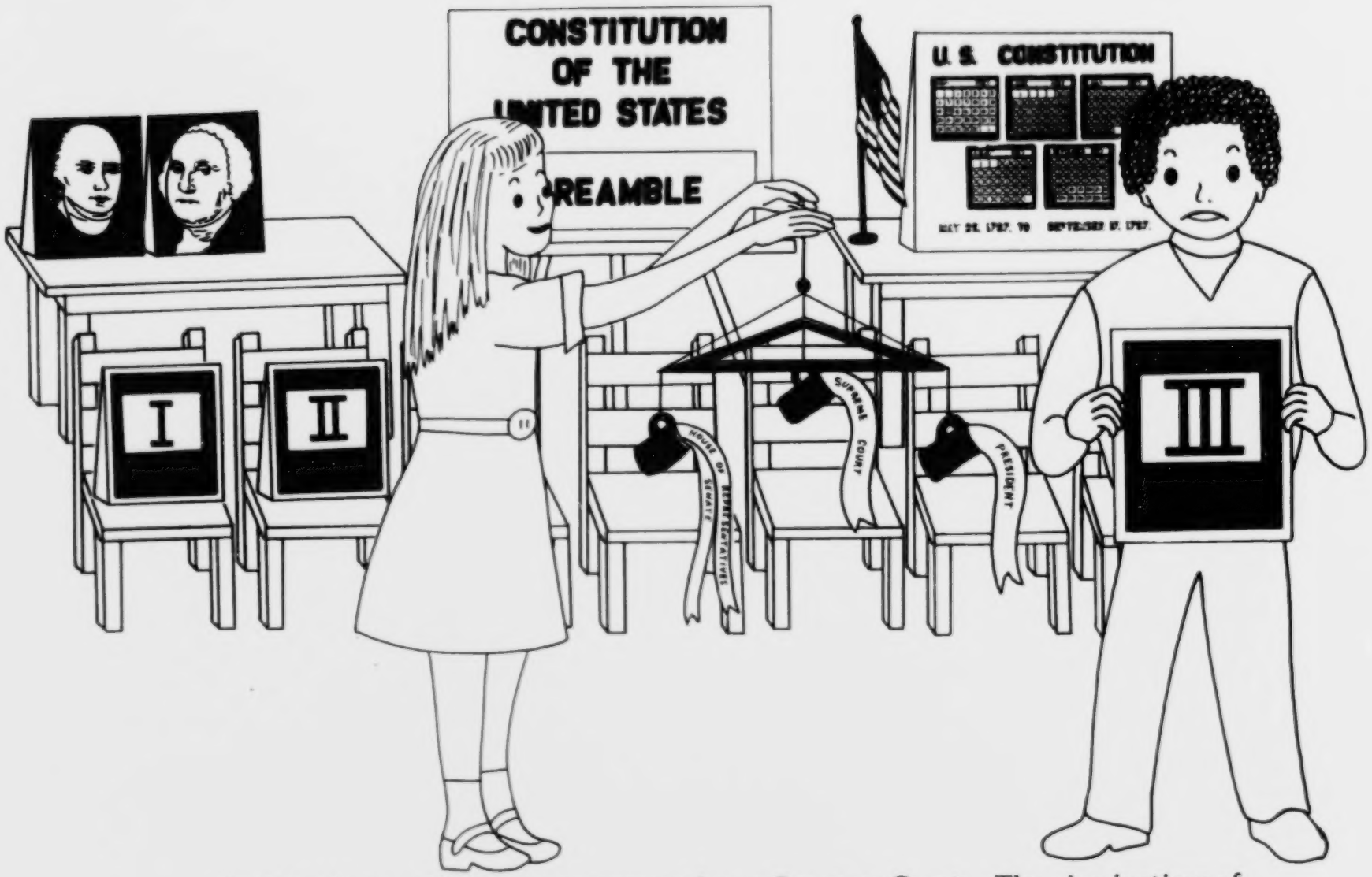


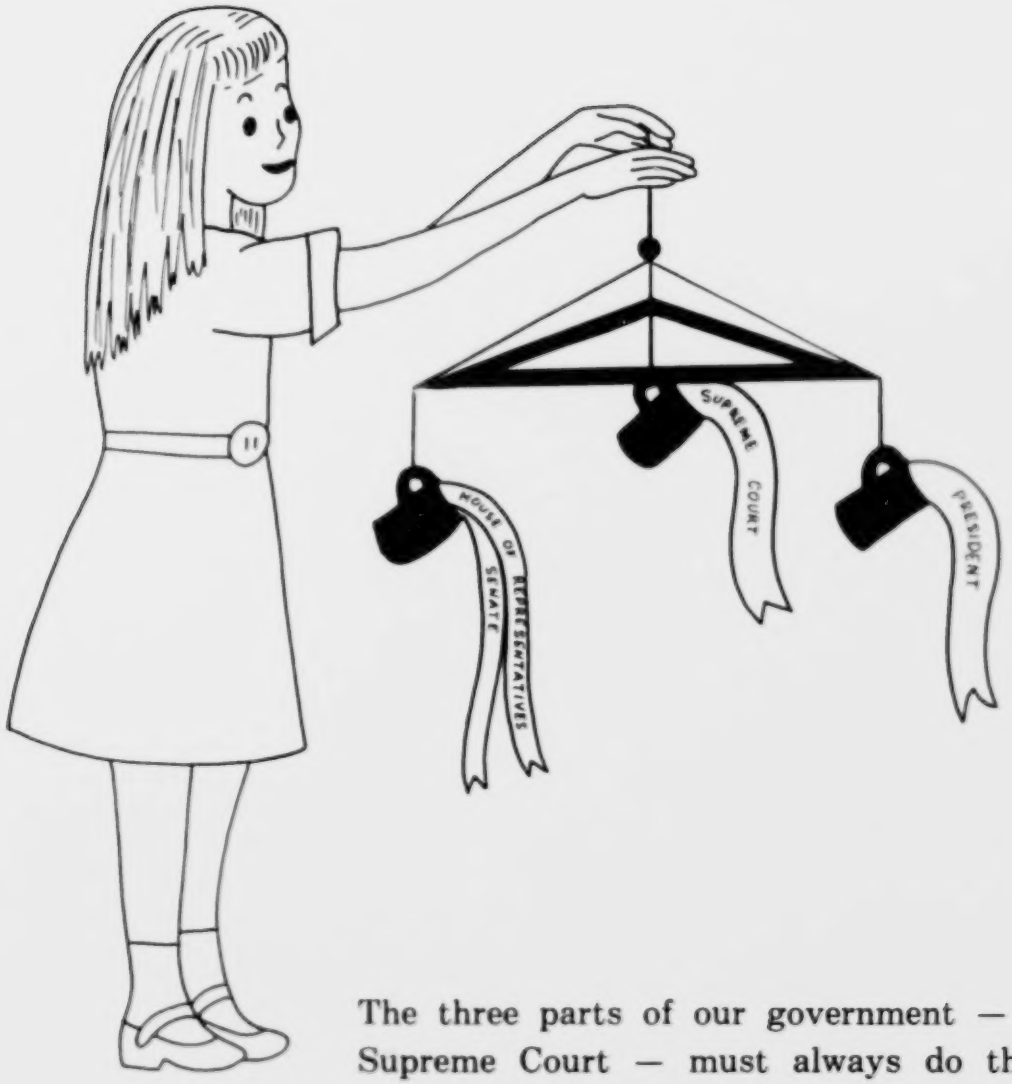
Article II says that our government has a President. Every four years we can vote for the person we want for President. The President and his helpers make sure that the laws are used to help the people, and that the people obey the laws. He also meets with leaders of other countries to talk about peace. He tells us about his work when he talks to us on television.



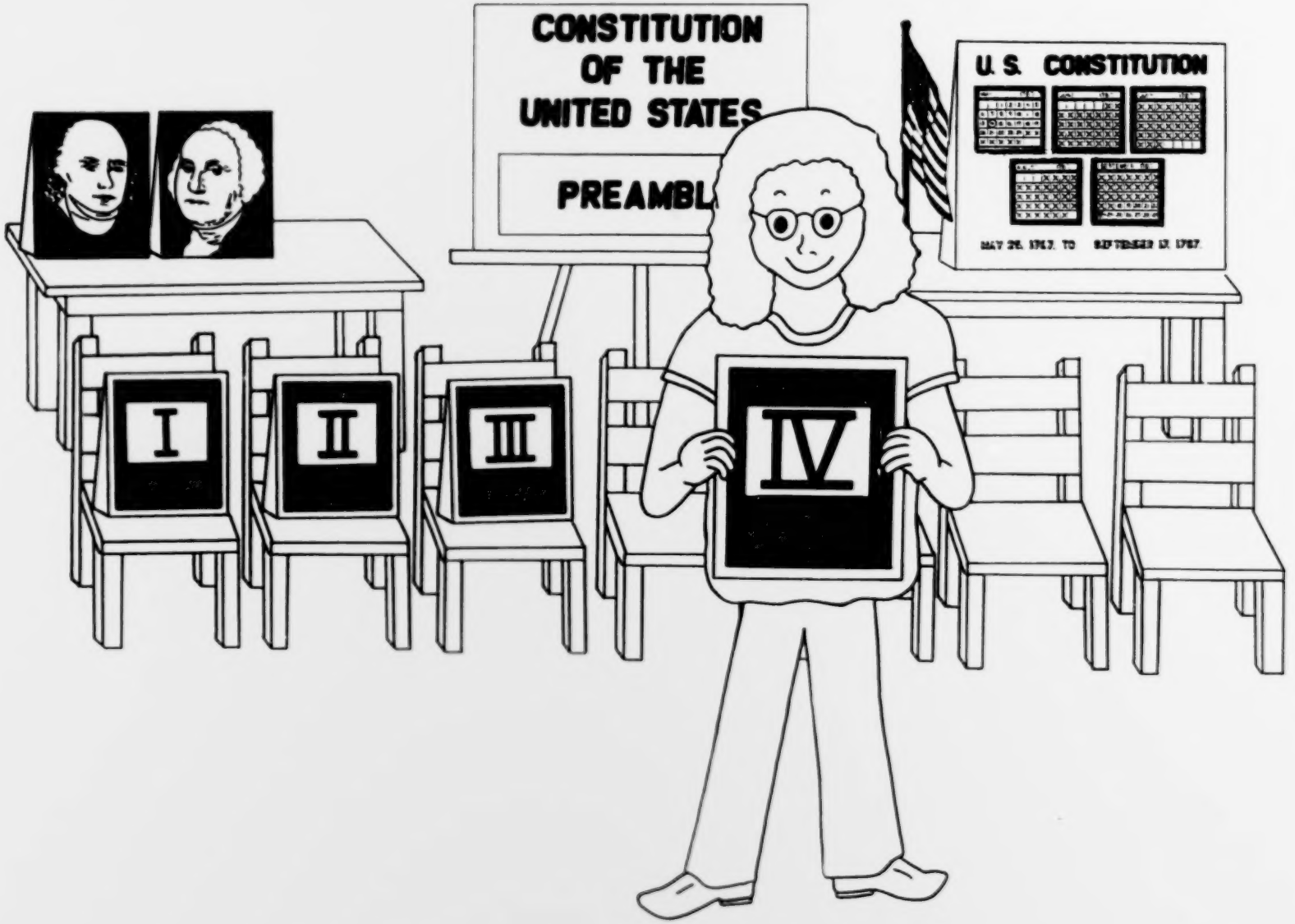
The third branch is the Supreme Court.



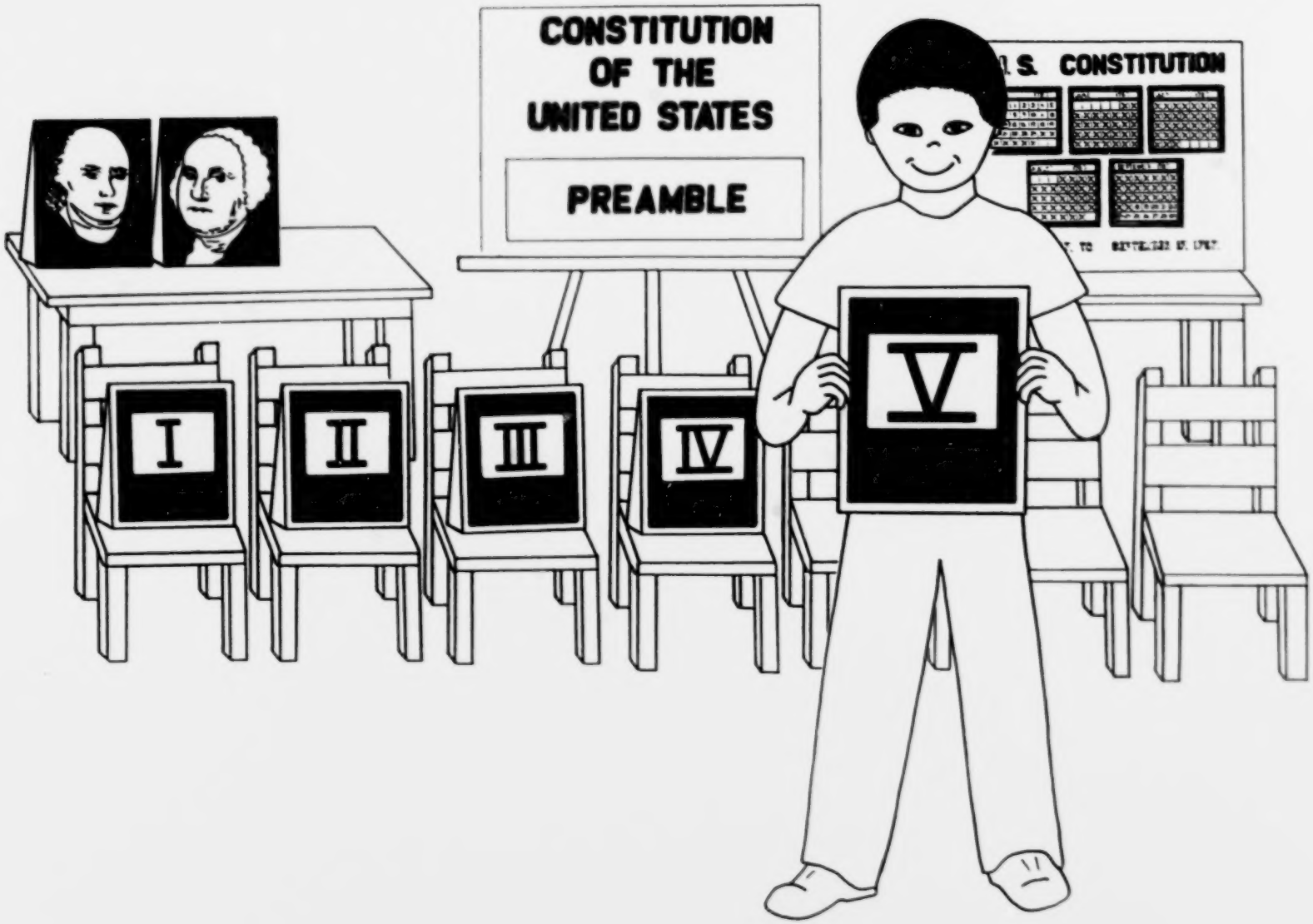
Article III says that our government has a Supreme Court. The nine justices of the Supreme Court explain the law. When people go to court because they disagree about something very important, the justices decide who is right according to the Constitution.



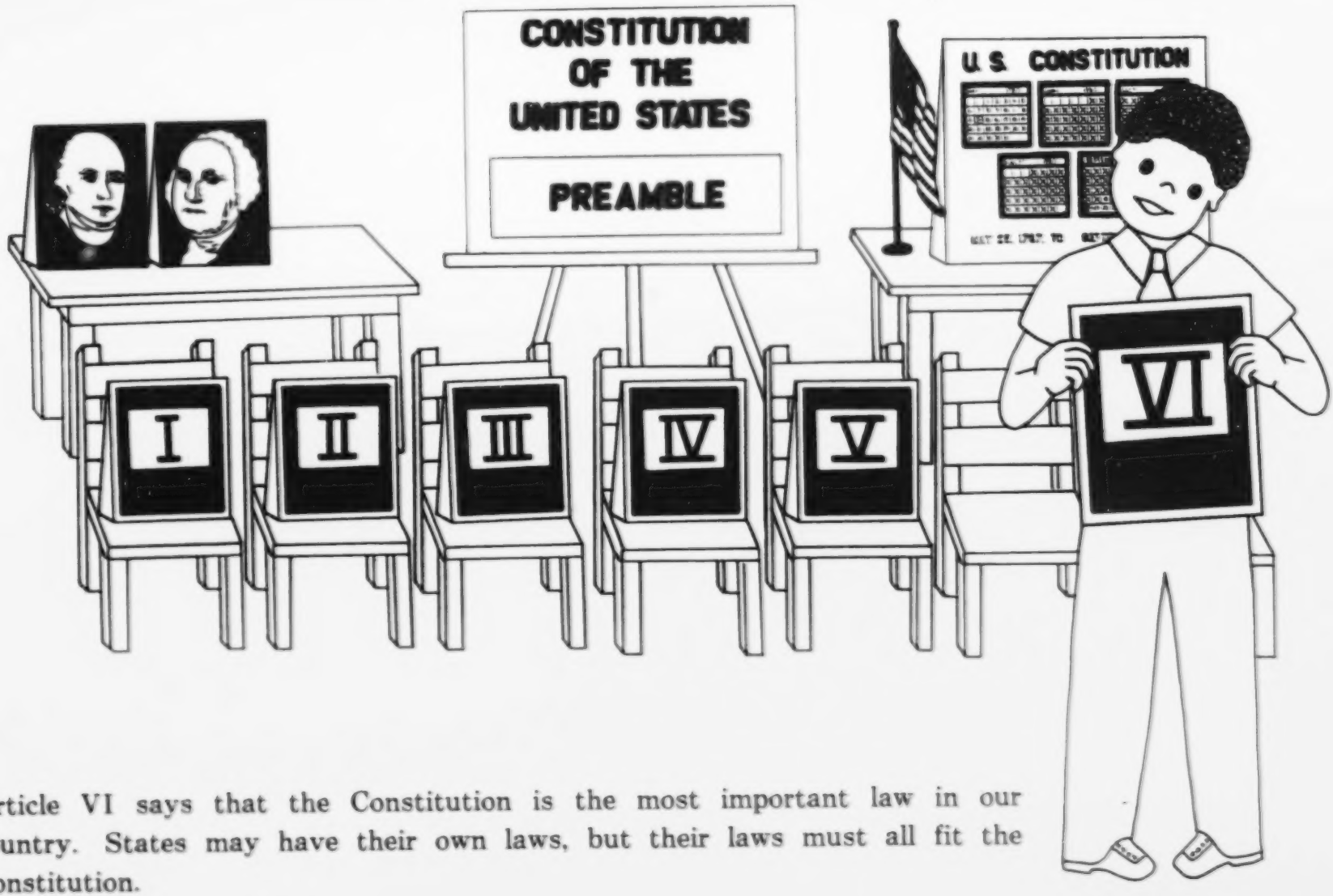
The three parts of our government — the Congress, the President, and the Supreme Court — must always do their jobs. Our government should be balanced to make sure that our people can live and be free and try to be happy.



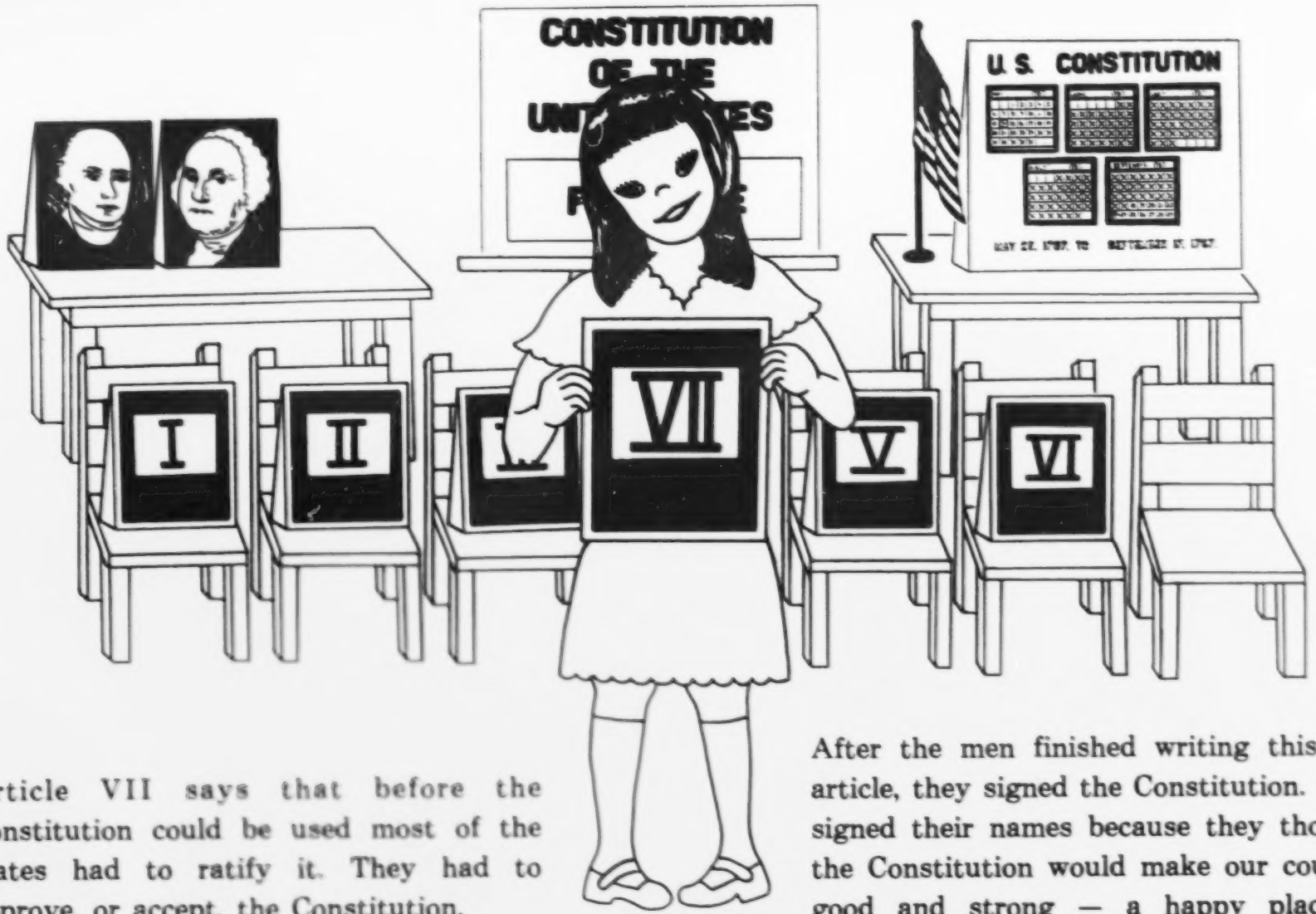
Article IV tells some things that the states are allowed to do. A person can go to Florida, California, or any state, and still be safe and happy.



Article V says that the Constitution can be changed. It isn't easy to do this. Many states must agree that it should be changed. A change, or something that is added, is called an amendment.

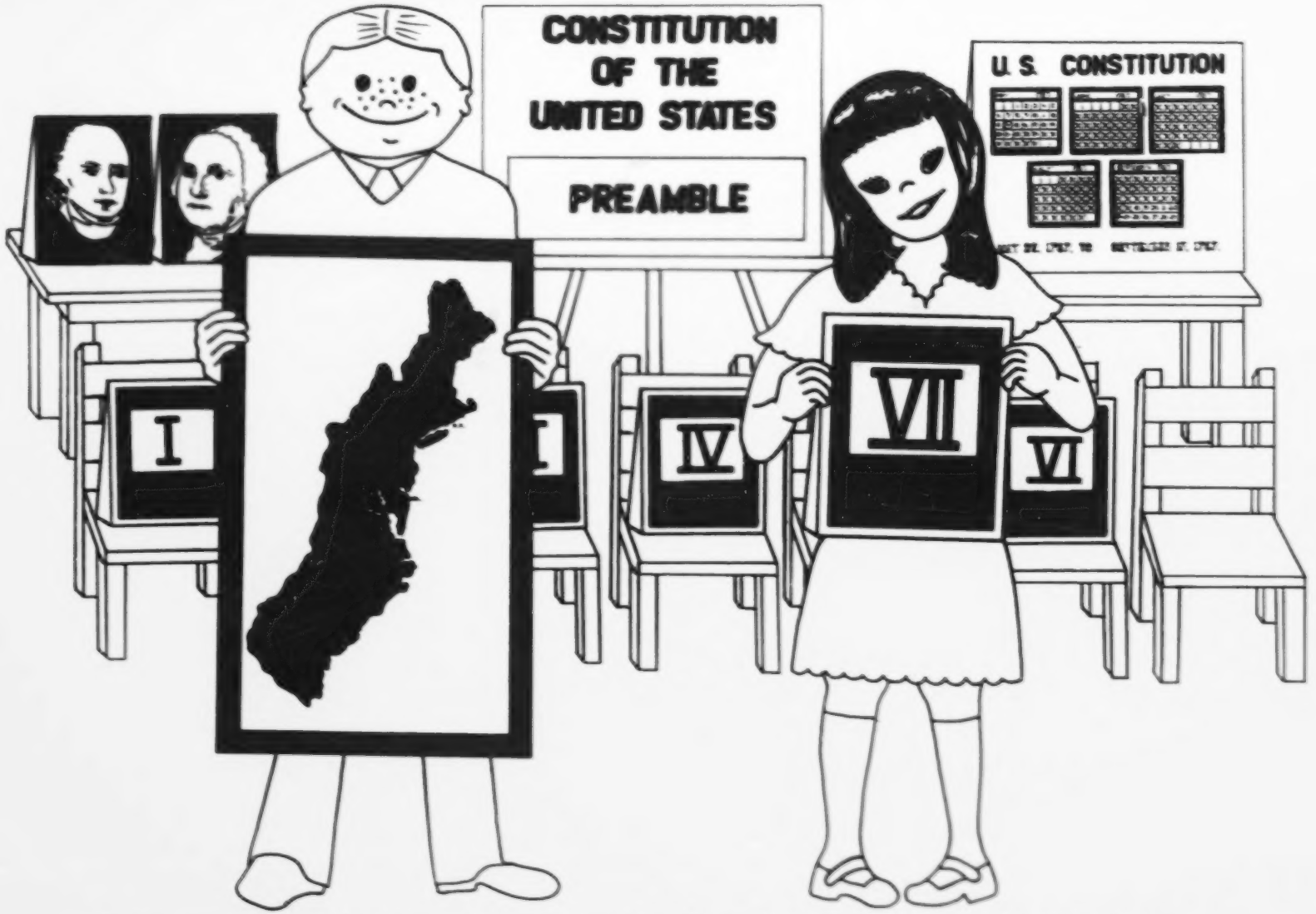


Article VI says that the Constitution is the most important law in our country. States may have their own laws, but their laws must all fit the Constitution.

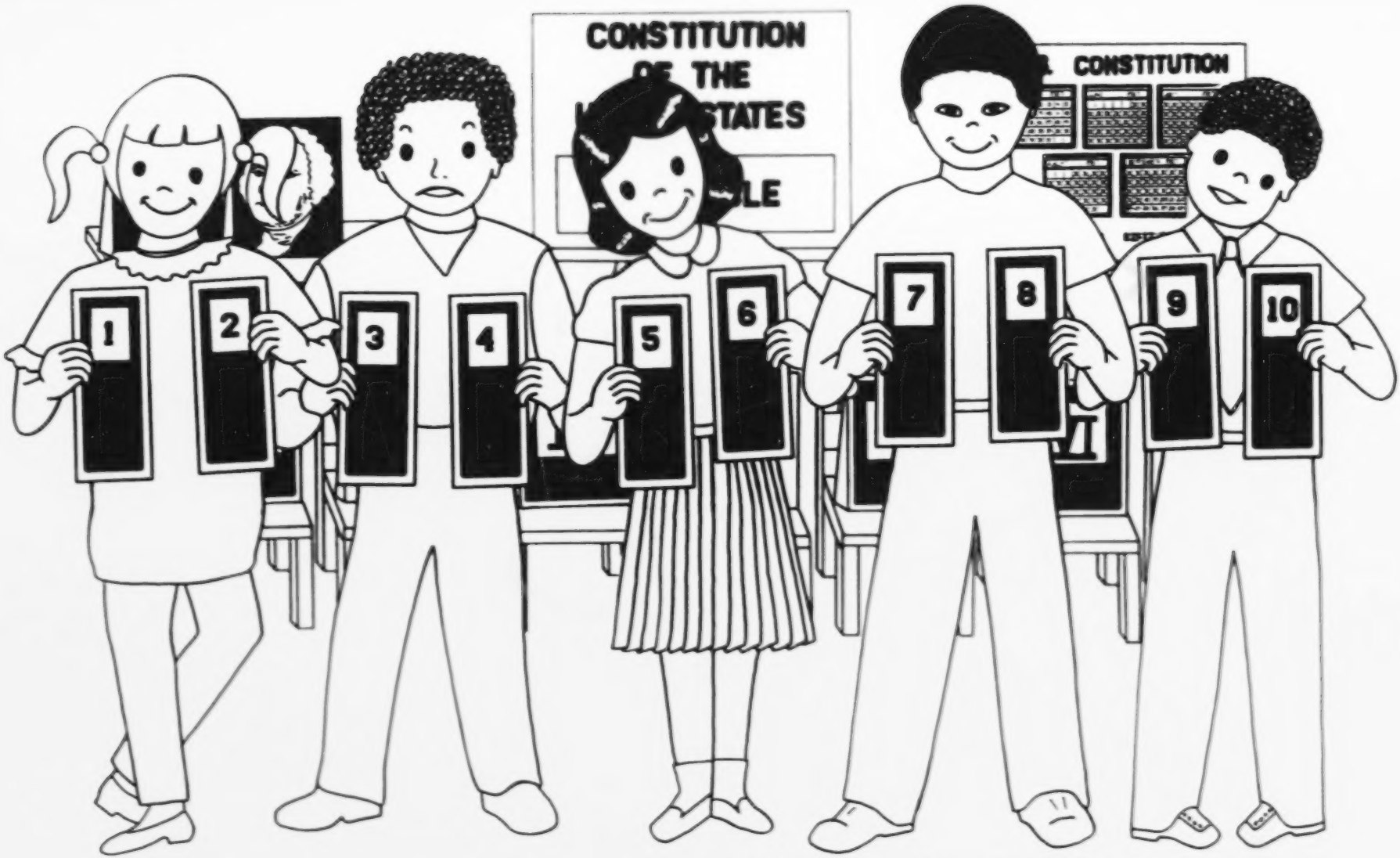


Article VII says that before the Constitution could be used most of the states had to ratify it. They had to approve, or accept, the Constitution.

After the men finished writing this last article, they signed the Constitution. They signed their names because they thought the Constitution would make our country good and strong — a happy place to live. Thirteen men had gone home. Forty-two were still there, and thirty-nine of them signed the Constitution.



There were only thirteen states when the Constitution was signed. People in these states had to think and talk about the Constitution. They had to decide whether to ratify it or not. The Constitution became our new law when most of the states ratified it by voting "yes".



Twenty-six amendments have been added to the Constitution. The first ten amendments were added right away. They were called the Bill of Rights. They make sure that the government of our country does not treat us wrongly.

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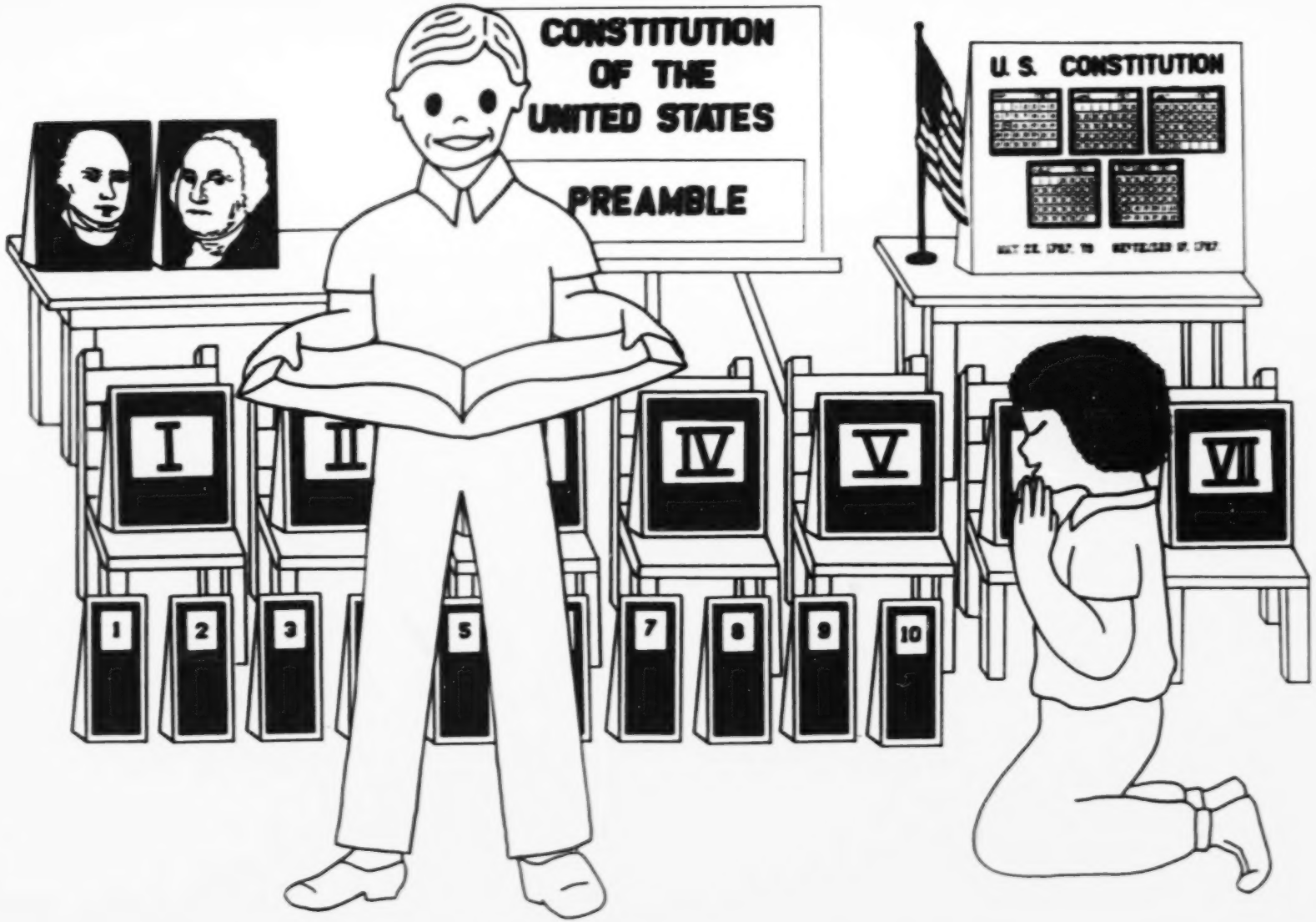
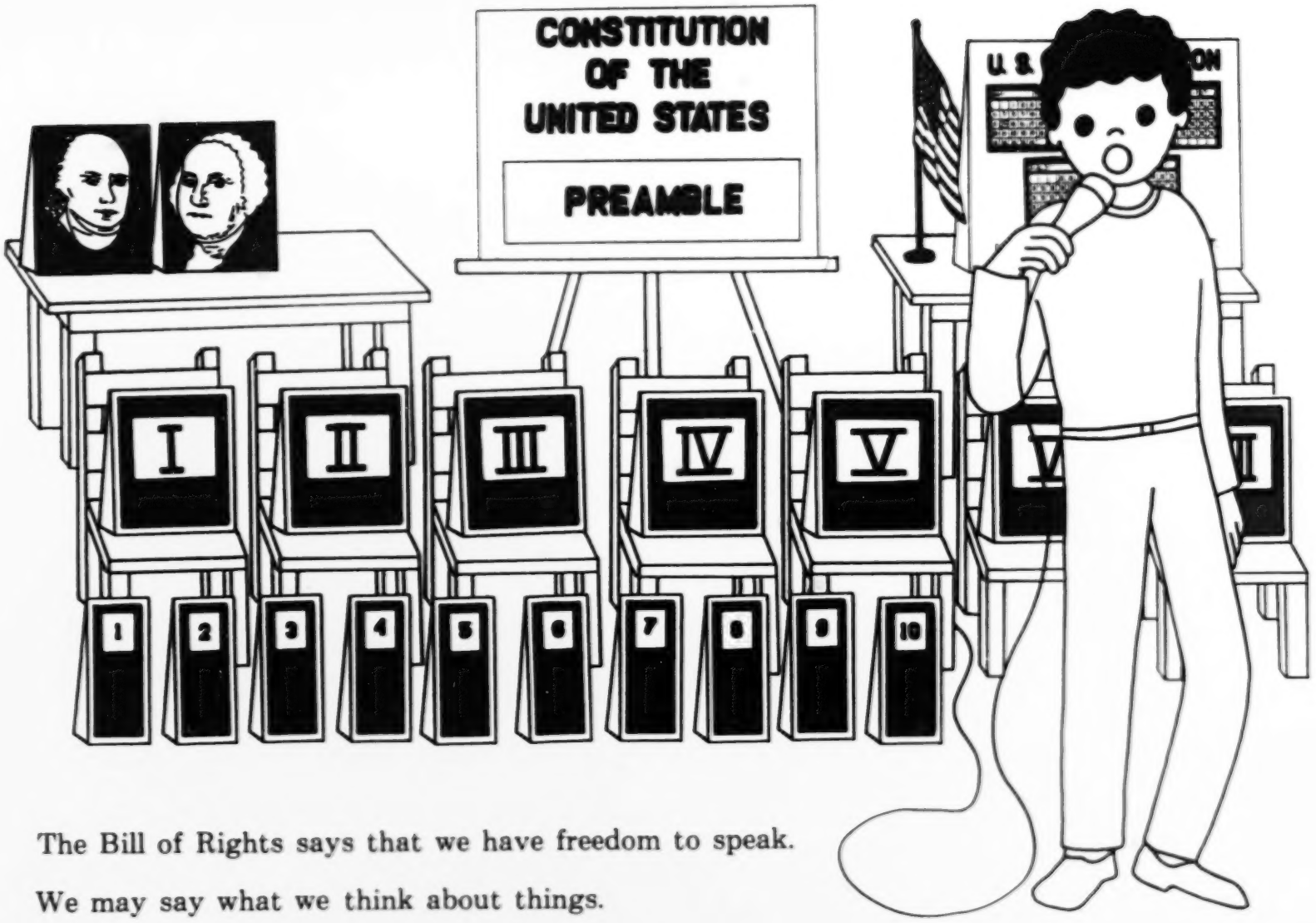
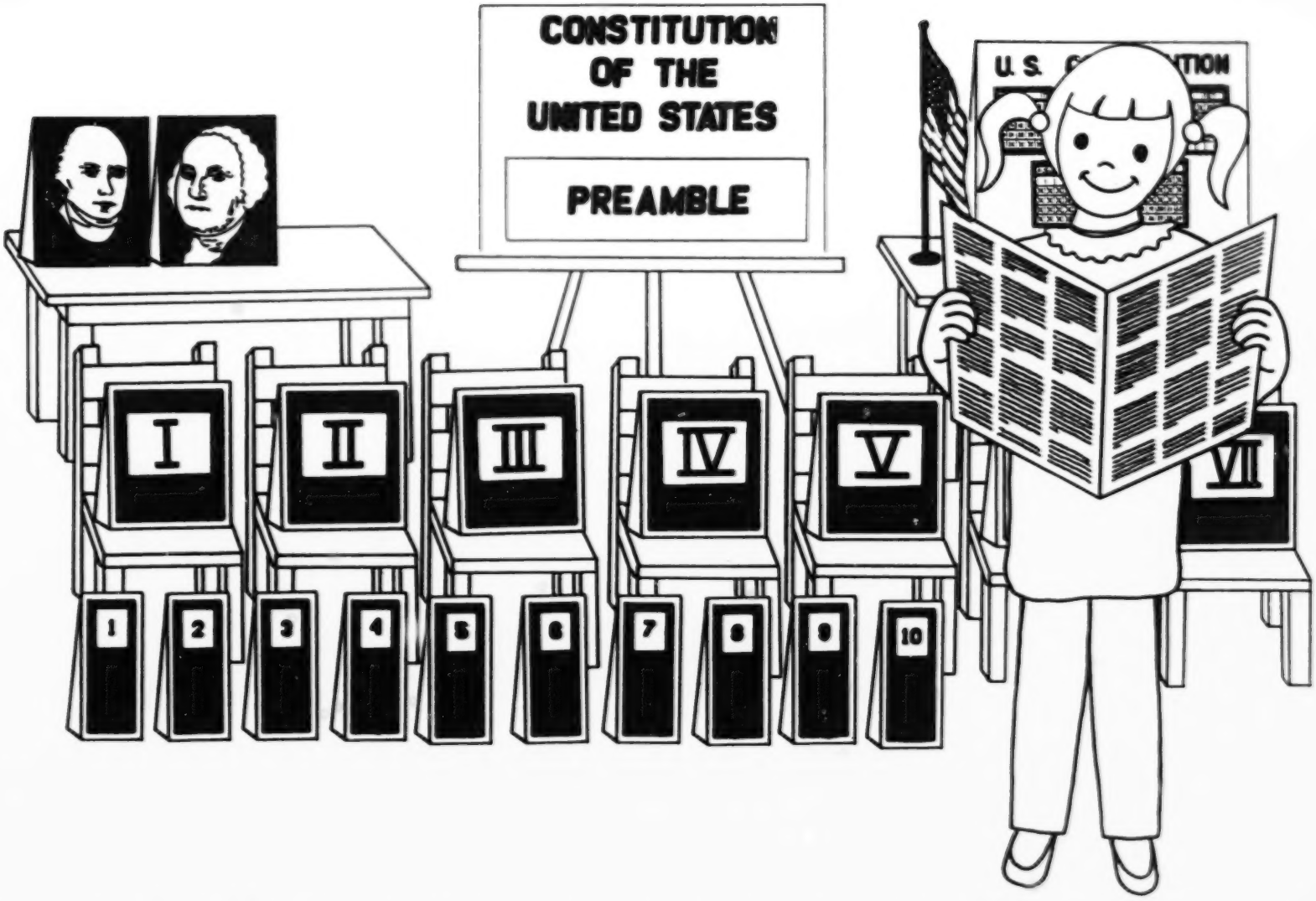


The Bill of Rights says that we have freedom to worship God. We may read the Bible and pray if we want to. We may go to any church we choose.

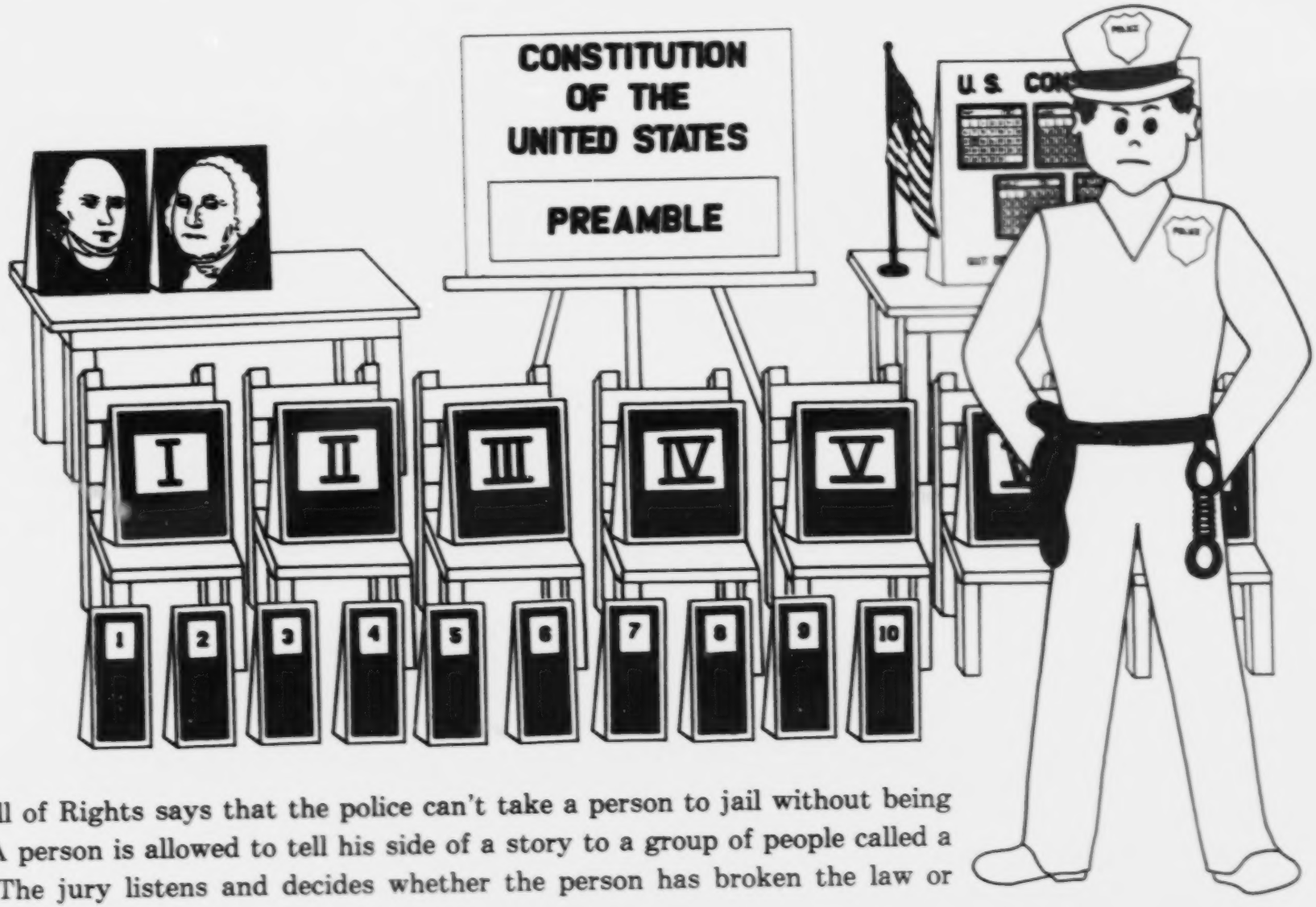


The Bill of Rights says that we have freedom to speak.

We may say what we think about things.

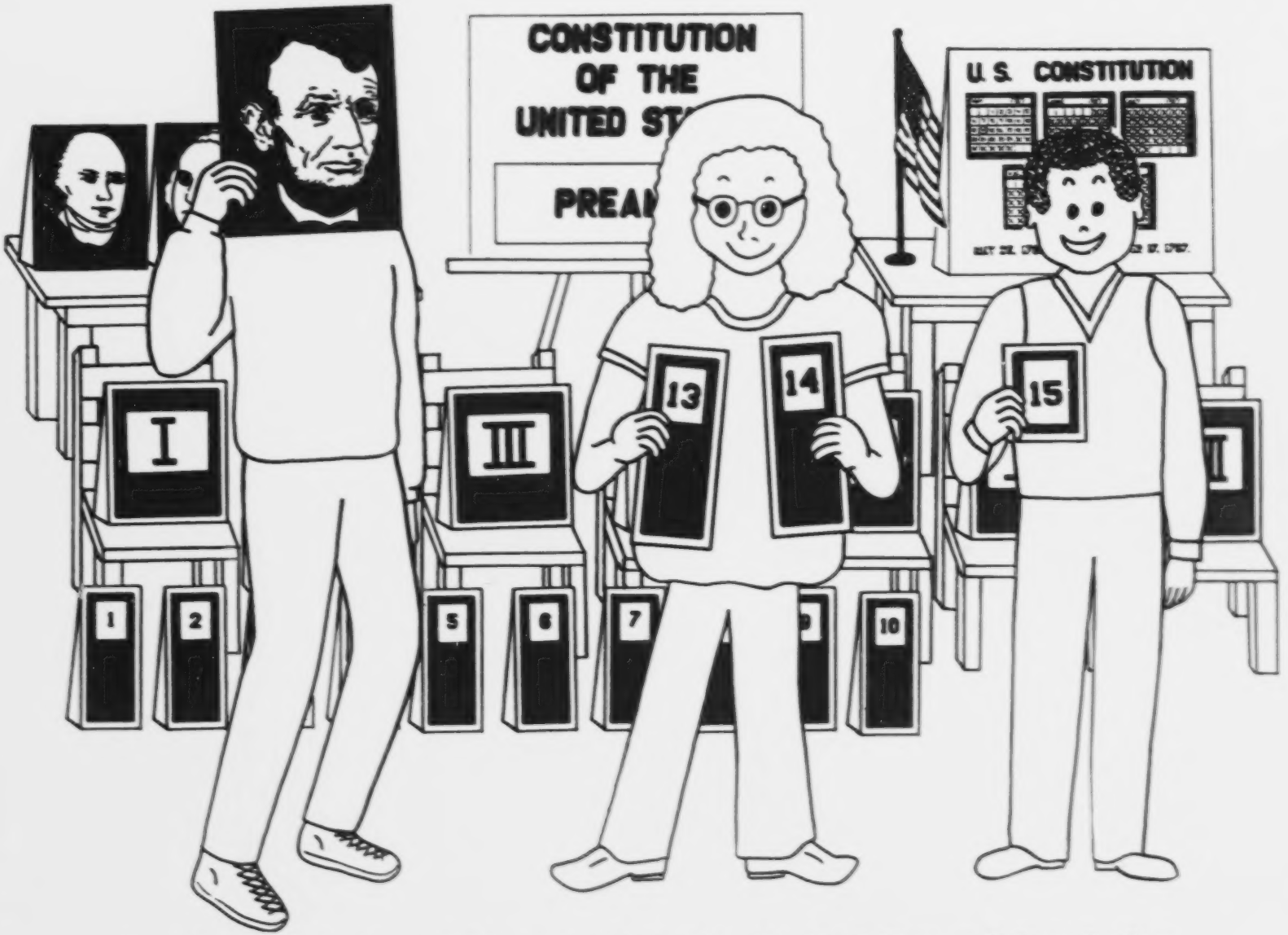


The Bill of Rights says that we have freedom to print the truth about things, and how we feel about them. We have freedom to read anything we choose.



The Bill of Rights says that the police can't take a person to jail without being fair. A person is allowed to tell his side of a story to a group of people called a jury. The jury listens and decides whether the person has broken the law or not.

After the Bill of Rights, more amendments were added. The 11th Amendment tells about lawsuits against states. The 12th Amendment tells how we choose our President and Vice-President.



Amendments 13, 14, and 15 were added after the Civil War ended, and after Abraham Lincoln was the President of the United States.

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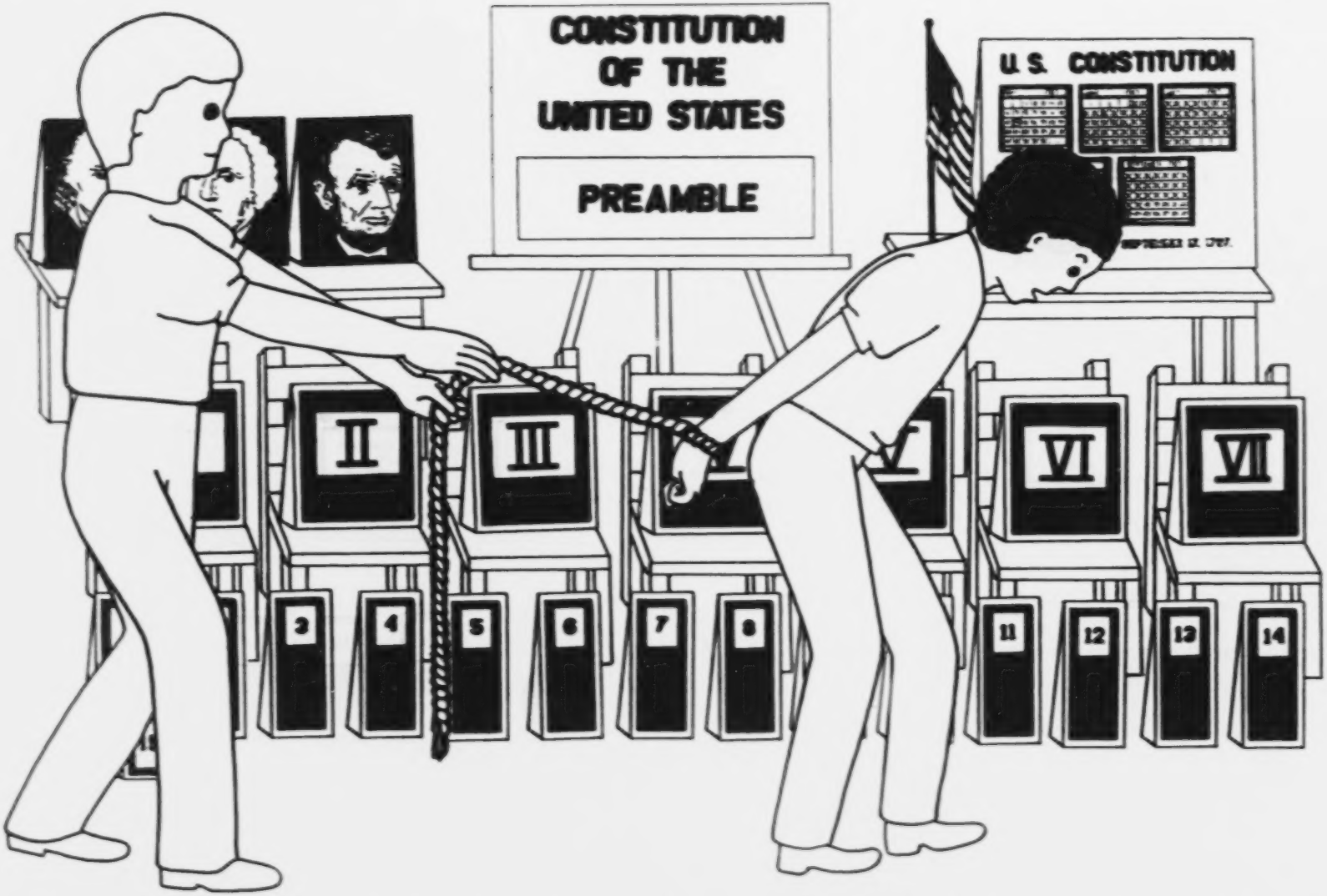
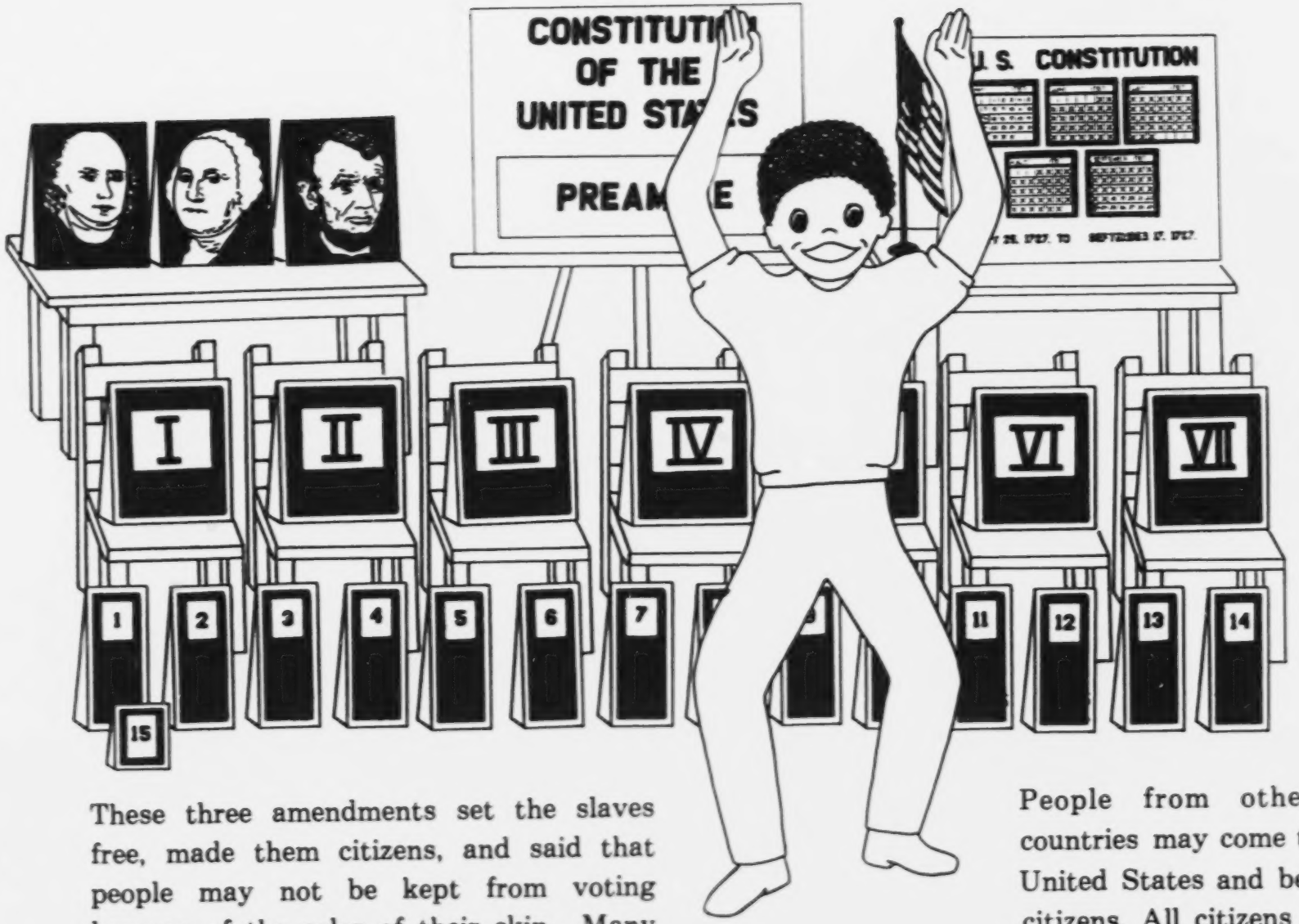


Before the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments there were many black slaves in the southern states.



These three amendments set the slaves free, made them citizens, and said that people may not be kept from voting because of the color of their skin. Many black children began to go to school for the first time.

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People from other countries may come to the United States and become citizens. All citizens must be treated fairly.

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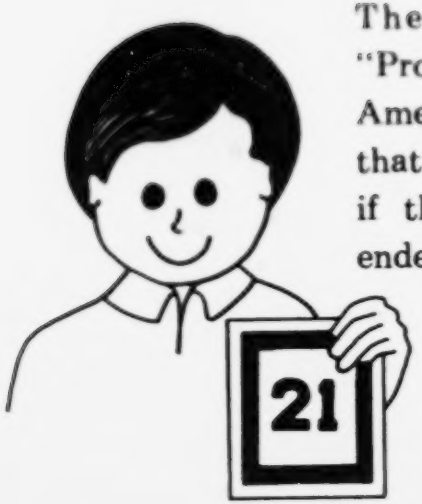
The 16th Amendment says that the government of our country may have an income tax.

The 17th Amendment says that we may vote for Senators.

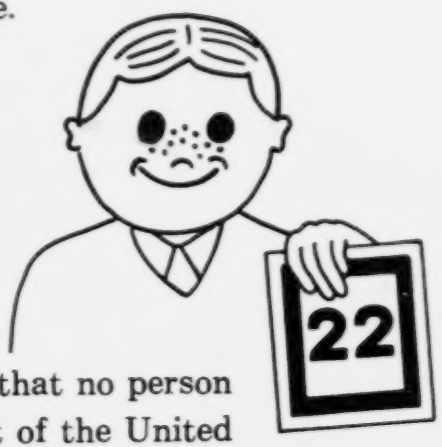
The 18th Amendment says that people are not allowed to make or sell beer or wine. That is called "Prohibition".

The 19th Amendment says that women may vote.

The 20th Amendment says that a new President or new Congressman may start working on his job earlier than before.



The 21st Amendment is about "Prohibition". It says that the 18th Amendment is not a law anymore, and that people may make or sell beer or wine if they want to. The 21st Amendment ended "Prohibition".



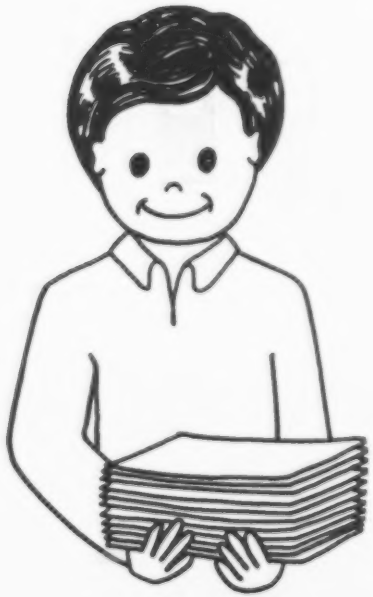
The 22nd Amendment says that no person may be chosen for President of the United States more than two times.

The 23rd Amendment says that the people in Washington D.C. (the capital of the United States) are allowed to vote for who they want for President.

The 24th Amendment says that voting is free. We don't have to pay tax money in order to vote.

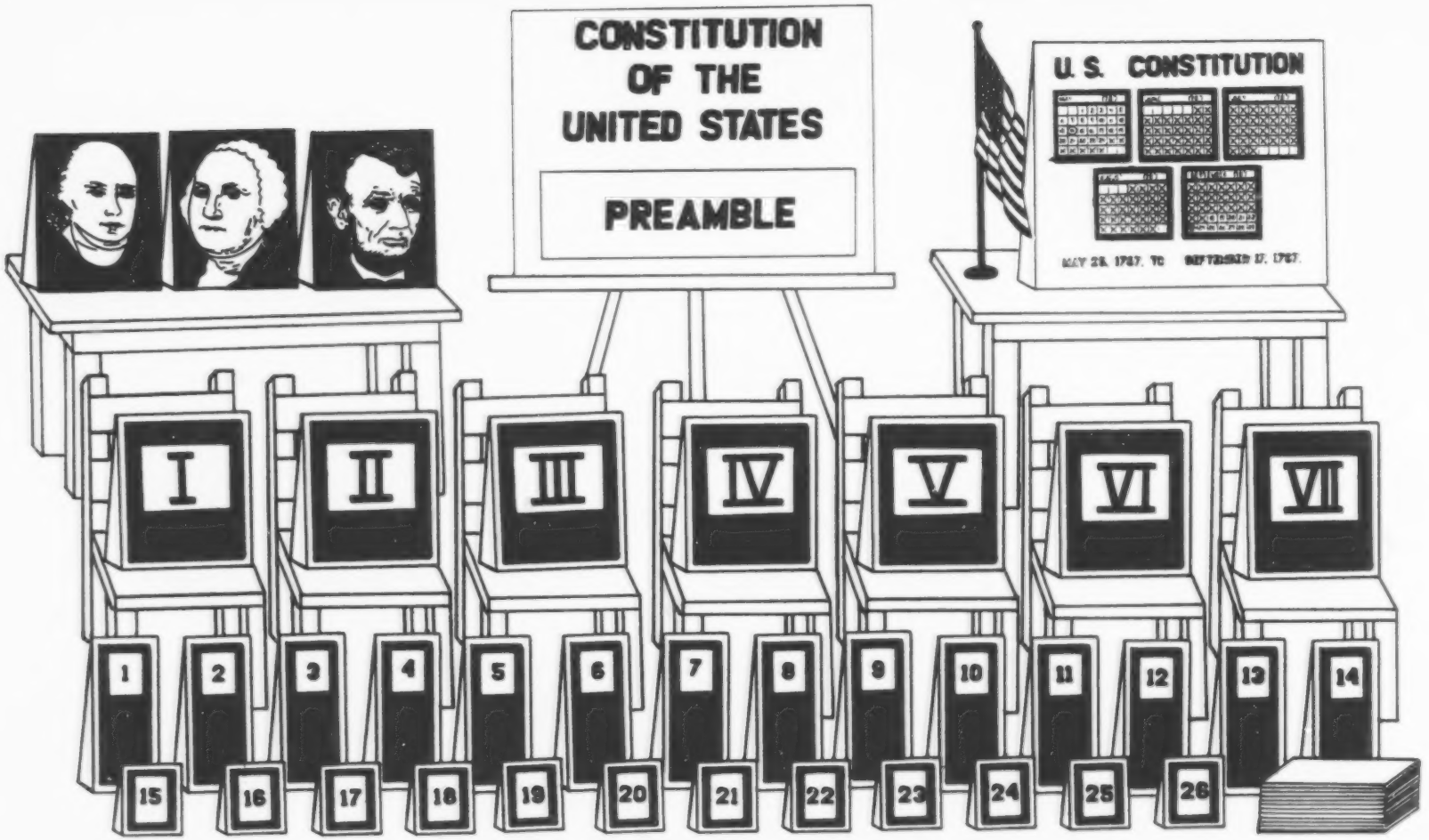
The 25th Amendment tells us what to do if something happens to the President and he can't finish his job. Then the Vice-President becomes the new President. It also tells us what to do if the Vice-President can't finish his job.

The last amendment is number 26. It says that people may vote as soon as they are eighteen years old.



Someday, more amendments may be added to our Constitution.
We have plenty of paper, and we can make changes if we need to.

The men who wrote our Constitution wanted the people in our country to live and be free and try to be happy. That's what we still want today.
We must all work together to keep our country strong.



The Constitution of the United States is wonderful and very important! It is older than the constitution of any other country.

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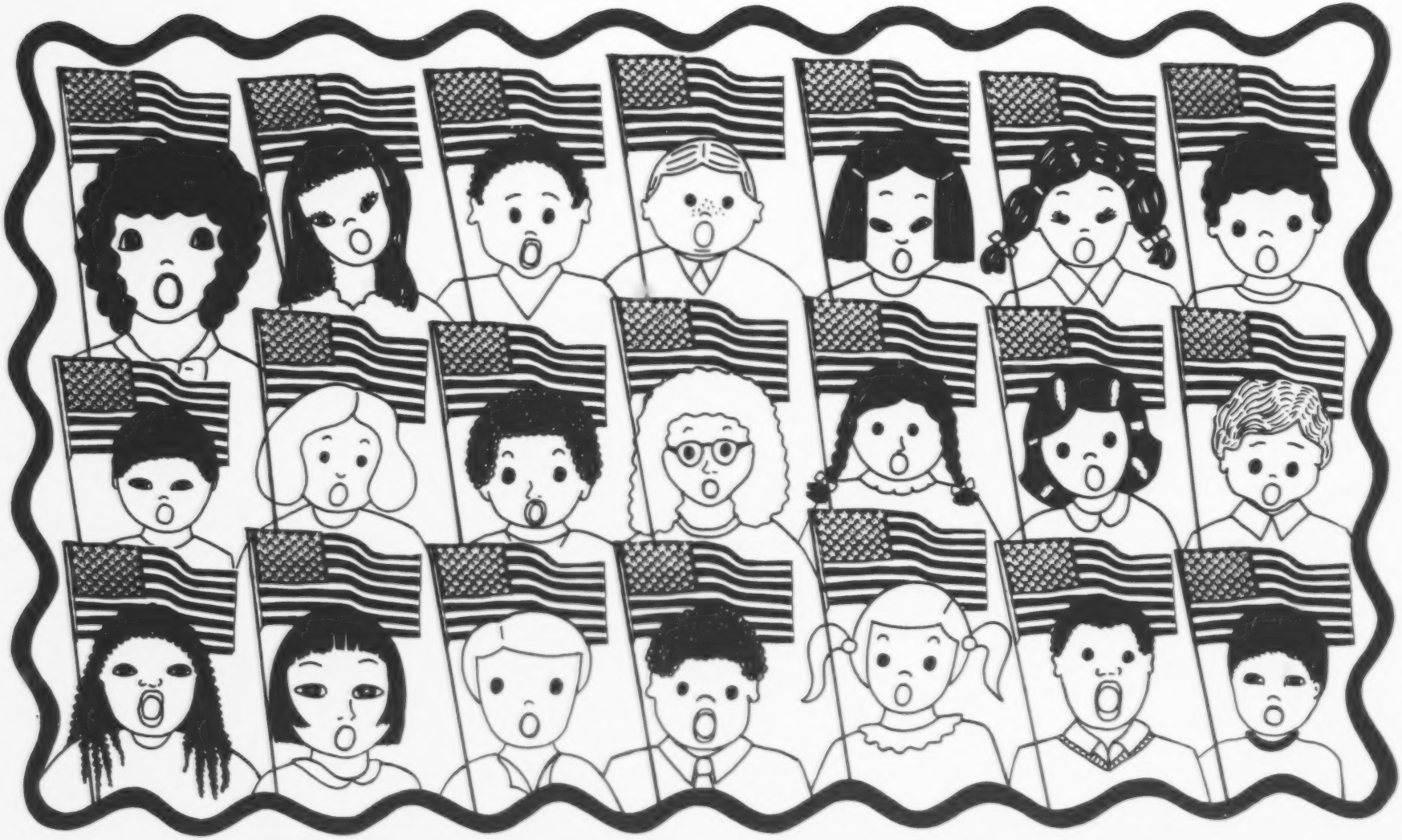


All the children marched to the front of the room with their flags. They sang "America" and it was beautiful!

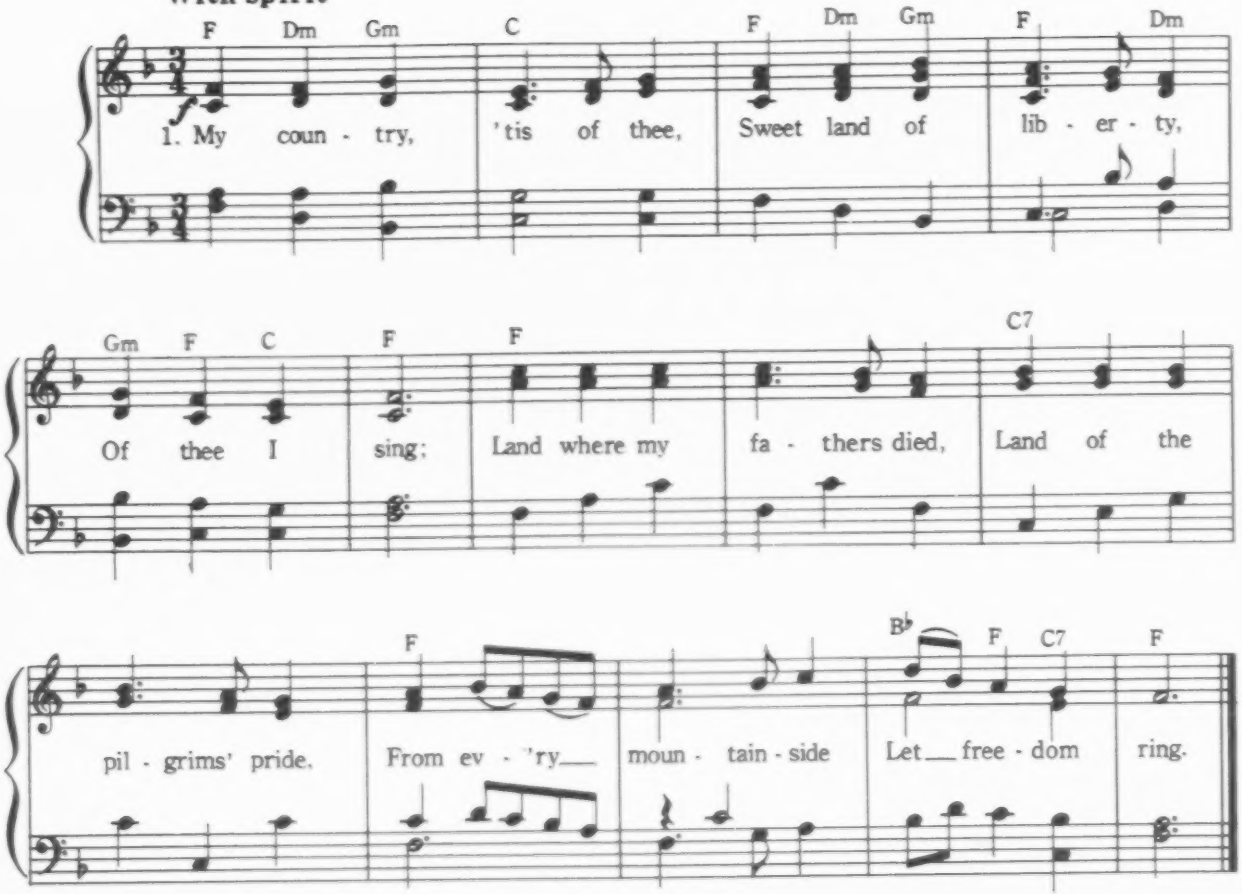
The children in the class learned a lot about the Constitution. They were proud and happy to live in a free country. Aren't you glad you live in a country where you are an important part of the government?

America

(My Country 'Tis Of Thee)

Words by
Samuel Francis Smith

Old English Air

With spirit

F Dm Gm C F Dm Gm F Dm
1. My coun - try, 'tis of thee, Sweet land of lib - er - ty,
Gm F C F F C7
Of thee I sing; Land where my fa - thers died, Land of the
F B♭ F C7 F
pil - grims' pride, From ev - 'ry moun - tain - side Let free - dom ring.

2. My native country, thee,
Land of the noble free,
Thy name I love:
I love thy rocks and rills
Thy woods and templed hills;
My heart with rapture thrills
Like that above.

3. Let music swell the breeze,
And ring from all the trees
Sweet freedom's song;
Let mortal tongues awake,
Let all that breathe partake,
Let rocks their silence break,
The sound prolong.

4. Our fathers' God, to thee,
Author of liberty,
To thee we sing;
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might,
Great God, our King.

Materials For A Classroom Presentation Of

THE CONSTITUTION

of the

UNITED STATES

Script, Props and Activities for
Elementary School Children

Written and Illustrated by
Janice Howes, M.Ed.

MATERIALS FOR A CLASSROOM PRESENTATION OF

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

Script, Props, and Activities
For Elementary School Children

Written and Illustrated by Janice Howes, M.Ed.

TEACHERS PUBLISHING HOUSE
P. O. Box 9358
Canton, Ohio 44711

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Walter E. Arms, Ph.D.
Elementary Education Dept.
University of Akron
Akron, Ohio

Loran Braught, Ph.D.
School of Education
Indiana State University

Guy Clifford, Ph.D.
History Department
Bridgewater State College
Boston, Massachusetts

James Dague, Ph.D.
Dept. of Education
John Carroll University
Cleveland, Ohio

Gloria Fimbres, Ph.D.
Teacher Education Program
University of California
San Diego, California

Arlene F. Gallagher, Ph.D.
School of Education
Boston University

Linda Gromer
Dir. of Instructional Media
Kentwood Public Schools
Kentwood, Michigan

William W. Joyce, Ph.D.
Professor of Education
Michigan State University

Ronald Kirkemo, Ph.D.
Professor, Political Science
Point Loma Nazarene College
San Diego, California

Kelly Koelker
Attorney
Atlanta, Georgia

Tarry L. Lindquist
Elementary Teacher
Mercer Island School District
Mercer Island, Washington

David Mancini, Ph.D.
Curriculum Director
Louisville Public Schools
Louisville, Ohio

James Martin
Social Studies Consultant
Stark County Dept. of Education
Louisville, Ohio

Maryanne Metcalfe, M.A., M.Ed.
English Department
Kent State University
Canton, Ohio

Karen O'Connor
Author
San Diego, California

Walter C. Parker, Ph.D.
College of Education
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington

Michael E. Parrish, Ph.D.
Dept. of History
University of California
San Diego, California

John Patrick, Ph.D.
Director, Soc. Studies Dev. Center
Indiana University

Richard C. Remy, Ph.D.
Director, Citizenship Dev. Program
Mershon Center
The Ohio State University

David E. Ross
History Teacher
Plain Local Schools
Canton, Ohio

Thomas D. Rowe, Jr.
Professor
Duke Law School
Durham, North Carolina

Jacquelyn Sato
Author
Kentwood, Michigan

Kenneth Smith
History Teacher
Louisville Public Schools
Louisville, Ohio

Kenneth Wulff, Ph.D.
Teacher Dev. and Curriculum Studies
Kent State University
Canton, Ohio

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Purchase of this book entitles the buyer to make copies of the following; (for use only in presenting their own study unit or program).

SCRIPT AND SCRIPT NOTES
FLAG
QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CONSTITUTION
ROOM PICTURE/DIAGRAM OF CONSTITUTION
UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION BIRTHDAY CAKE
PICTURE INFORMATION, THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

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Materials in this book may be used to present the program found in the following book:

A CLASSROOM PRESENTS THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

A Story For Elementary School Children
Written and Illustrated by Janice Howes, M.Ed.

Teachers Publishing House
P. O. Box 9358
Canton, Ohio 44711

MATERIALS FOR A CLASSROOM PRESENTATION OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

Script, Props, and Activities For Elementary School Children

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CURRICULUM UNIT OUTLINE/OBJECTIVES

Grade Level: Elementary grades 1 - 5

For use with younger children: The narration may be done by the teacher, using the picture book text. Children will do limited acting and place props in their correct places.

For use with older children: The script in this "MATERIALS" book may be used. The narration may be divided among several children, or done by one child or an adult.

Time: 30 minutes each day, for 7 instructional days.

Objectives: Some possible objectives may include, but are not limited to, those suggested below. The teacher is encouraged to modify these objectives to meet the specific needs and goals of learning for his/her particular grade level and class situation.

As a result of participation in this Bicentennial presentation the child will:

A. Cognitive Behavior
   1. Identify and describe the three branches of our federal government.
   2. Relate our rights and freedoms to the Bill of Rights.
   3. Identify names and faces of three famous men in our history.

B. Affective Behavior
   1. Enthusiastically join in a birthday celebration of the Constitution of the United States.
   2. Recognize the Constitution as the basis for the organization of our federal government.

3. Appropriately use the following terms:

GOVERNMENT, CONSTITUTION, FEDERAL, PREAMBLE, ARTICLE, CONGRESS, SENATE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, VOTE, PRESIDENT, SUPREME COURT, JUSTICES, AMENDMENT, RATIFY, BILL OF RIGHTS, JURY, LAWSUITS, CIVIL WAR, SLAVES, CITIZENS, INCOME TAX, PROHIBITION, CAPITAL.

C. Psycho/Motor Behavior

1. Label a room picture/diagram of the Constitution.
2. Proudly participate in group singing of a patriotic song.
3. Synthesize his actions and words with the total content of the presentation.

Teaching Materials:

Picture book, A CLASSROOM PRESENTS THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

Props provided in this "MATERIALS" book (to be mounted on poster board).

Other props: Triangle balance, made with 3 rulers, 3 cups, string, and strips of paper (instructions in "MATERIALS" book).
Rope for slave, Bible, microphone, newspaper.

Student Evaluation:

Page of QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CONSTITUTION.

Other Suggestions:

Children may be encouraged to wear something red, white, and/or blue (if possible) at the final presentation of the program.

Pre-recording the script may help the children relax and be more easily understood.

Script for: THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES, by Janice Howes

For use with younger children: The narration may be done by the teacher, using the picture book text. Children will do limited acting and place props in their correct places.

For use with older children: The following script may be used. The narration may be divided among several children, or done by one child or an adult.

Teacher: Welcome, opening remarks.

Flag holder: Will everyone please stand and say the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. (Pledge).

You may be seated.

Narrator: Our program is about the Constitution of the United States.

About 200 years ago, 55 men met together in Philadelphia to talk about writing a plan for the government of our new country. They called this plan the Constitution of the United States.

George Washington: My name is George Washington. I was the president of that important meeting.

Narrator: It was a big job to write the Constitution. The men at the meeting did not want our country to be ruled by a king. They wanted the people to have a part in our government.

They had to think about what kinds of laws should be written. They had to think about the Indians, and about people who lived in other countries, too.

Sometimes the men were happy. Sometimes they were sad or angry and then they would argue. Sometimes they were puzzled. But they were always thinking about what would be best for our country.

James Madison: My name is James Madison. They call me the Father of the Constitution.

Narrator: James Madison did a lot of writing at the meeting. The 55 men who met together to write the Constitution came from many different states.

Calendar holder: It took them almost four months to write the Constitution.

"Constitution" holder: The United States Constitution is the highest law of our country.

Narrator: It tells us how to organize our federal government. The federal government is the government of our whole country. The Constitution tells what our federal government is allowed to do.

"Preamble" holder: The first part of the Constitution is called the Preamble.

Narrator: The Preamble tells why the men were writing the Constitution. They wanted the states in our country to work together better. The Preamble says that they wanted our country to be a great place to live for a long, long time.

When the Constitution was first written it had seven parts, which were called articles.

"Balance" holder: The first three articles tell about the three branches of our government.

"Congress cup" holder: The first branch is Congress.

Article I holder: Article I says that our government has a Congress, with two parts, a Senate, and a House of Representatives.

Narrator: When we vote we choose who we want for our Senators and Representatives.

Congress makes the laws for our country.

"President cup" holder: The second branch is the President.

Article II holder: Article II says that our government has a President.

Narrator: Every four years we can vote for the person we want for President. The President and his helpers make sure that the laws are used to help the people, and that the people obey the laws.

He also meets with leaders of other countries to talk about peace. He tells us about his work when he talks to us on television.

"Supreme Court cup" holder: The third branch is the Supreme Court.

Article III holder: Article III says that our government has a Supreme Court.

Narrator: The nine justices of the Supreme Court explain the law. When people go to court because they disagree about something very important, the justices decide who is right according to the Constitution.

The three parts of our government — the Congress, the President, and the Supreme Court — must always do their jobs. Our government should be balanced to make sure that our people can live and be free and try to be happy.

Article IV holder: Article IV tells some things that the states are allowed to do.

Narrator: A person can go to Florida, California, or any state, and still be safe and happy.

Article V holder: Article V says that the Constitution can be changed.

Narrator: It isn't easy to do this. Many states must agree that it should be changed. A change, or something that is added, is called an amendment.

Article VI holder: Article VI says that the Constitution is the most important law in our country.

Narrator: States may have their own laws, but their laws must all fit the Constitution.

Article VII holder: Article VII says that before the Constitution could be used most of the states had to ratify it. They had to approve, or accept, the Constitution.

Narrator: After the men finished writing this last article, they signed the Constitution.

They signed their names because they thought the Constitution would make our country good and strong — a happy place to live.

Thirteen men had gone home. Forty-two were still there, and thirty-nine of them signed the Constitution.

Map holder: There were only thirteen states when the Constitution was signed.

Narrator: People in these states had to think and talk about the Constitution. They had to decide whether to ratify it or not. The Constitution became our new law when most of the states ratified it by voting "yes".

Since then twenty-six amendments have been added to the Constitution.

"1" to "10" holders: (In unison) The first ten amendments were added right away. They were called the Bill of Rights.

Narrator: They make sure that the government of our country does not treat us wrongly.

Kneeling person: The Bill of Rights says that we have freedom to worship God.

Bible holder: We may read the Bible and pray if we want to. We may go to any church we choose.

Microphone holder: The Bill of Rights says that we have freedom to speak.

Narrator: We may say what we think about things.

The Bill of Rights says that we have freedom to print the truth about things, and how we feel about them.

Newspaper holder: We have freedom to read anything we choose.

Policeman: The Bill of Rights says that the police can't take a person to jail without being fair.

Narrator: A person is allowed to tell his side of a story to a group of people called a jury. The jury listens and decides whether the person has broken the law or not.

After the Bill of Rights, more amendments were added.

"11" holder: The 11th Amendment tells about lawsuits against states.

"12" holder: The 12th Amendment tells how we choose our President and Vice-President.

Abraham Lincoln: I am Abraham Lincoln. I was President more than 100 years ago.

"13" holder: Amendments 13, 14, and 15 were added after the Civil War ended, and after Abraham Lincoln was the President of the United States.

Boy with slave: Before the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments there were many black slaves in the southern states.

"14" holder: These three amendments set the slaves free, made them citizens, and said that people may not be kept from voting because of the color of their skin.

"15" holder: Many black children began to go to school for the first time.

Slave: I'm free!

Narrator: People from other countries may come to the United States and become citizens.

All citizens must be treated fairly.

"16" holder: The 16th Amendment says that the government of our country may have an income tax.

"17" holder: The 17th Amendment says that we may vote for Senators.

"18" holder: The 18th Amendment says that people are not allowed to make or sell beer or wine.

Narrator: That is called "Prohibition".

"19" holder: The 19th Amendment says that women may vote.

"20" holder: The Twentieth Amendment says that a new President or new Congressman may start working on his job earlier than before.

"21" holder: The 21st Amendment is about "Prohibition".

Narrator: It says that the Eighteenth Amendment is not a law anymore, and that people may make or sell beer or wine if they want to. The 21st Amendment ended "Prohibition".

"22" holder: The 22nd Amendment says that no person may be chosen for President of the United States more than two times.

"23" holder: The 23rd Amendment says that the people in Washington D.C. (the capital of the United States) are allowed to vote for who they want for President.

"24" holder: The 24th Amendment says that voting is free. We don't have to pay tax money in order to vote.

"25" holder: The 25th Amendment tells us what to do if something happens to the President and he can't finish his job. Then the Vice President becomes the new president.

Narrator: It also tells us what to do if the Vice President can't finish his job.

"26" holder: The last amendment is number 26. It says that people may vote as soon as they are 18 years old.

Paper holder: Someday, more amendments may be added to our Constitution. We have plenty of paper, and we can make changes if we need to.

Narrator: The men who wrote our Constitution wanted the people in our country to live and be free and try to be happy. That's what we still want today. We must all work together to keep our country strong.

The Constitution of the United States is wonderful and very important! It is older than the constitution of any other country.

(Class prepares to sing.)

We would like to sing a song for you.

(Children sing "America", or other patriotic song.)

We learned a lot about our Constitution. We are proud and happy to live in a free country!

Aren't you glad you live in a country where you are an important part of the government?

Teacher: Closing remarks.

SCRIPT NOTES

These are to be mounted on back of props or held by children.

(Cut on dotted lines)

Flag holder:

Will everyone please stand and say the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

(Pledge)

You may be seated.

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My name is George Washington. I was the president of that important meeting.

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"Supreme Court cup" holder:
The third branch is the Supreme Court.

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Article V says the United States Constitution can be changed.

Article VI holder:
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Map holder:
There were only thirteen states when the Constitution was signed.

"1" and "2" holder:
(in unison with other Bill of Rights holders)
The first 10 amendments were added right away
They were called the Bill of Rights.

"3" and "4" holder:
(in unison with other Bill of Rights holders)
The first 10 amendments were added right away.
They were called the Bill of Rights.

"5" and "6" holder:
(in unison with other Bill of Rights holders)
The first 10 amendments were added right away.
They were called the Bill of Rights.

"7" and "8" holder:
(in unison with other Bill of Rights holders)
The first ten amendments were added right away.
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The 25th Amendment tells us what to do if something happens to the President and he can't finish his job. Then the Vice President becomes the new President.

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Paper holder:
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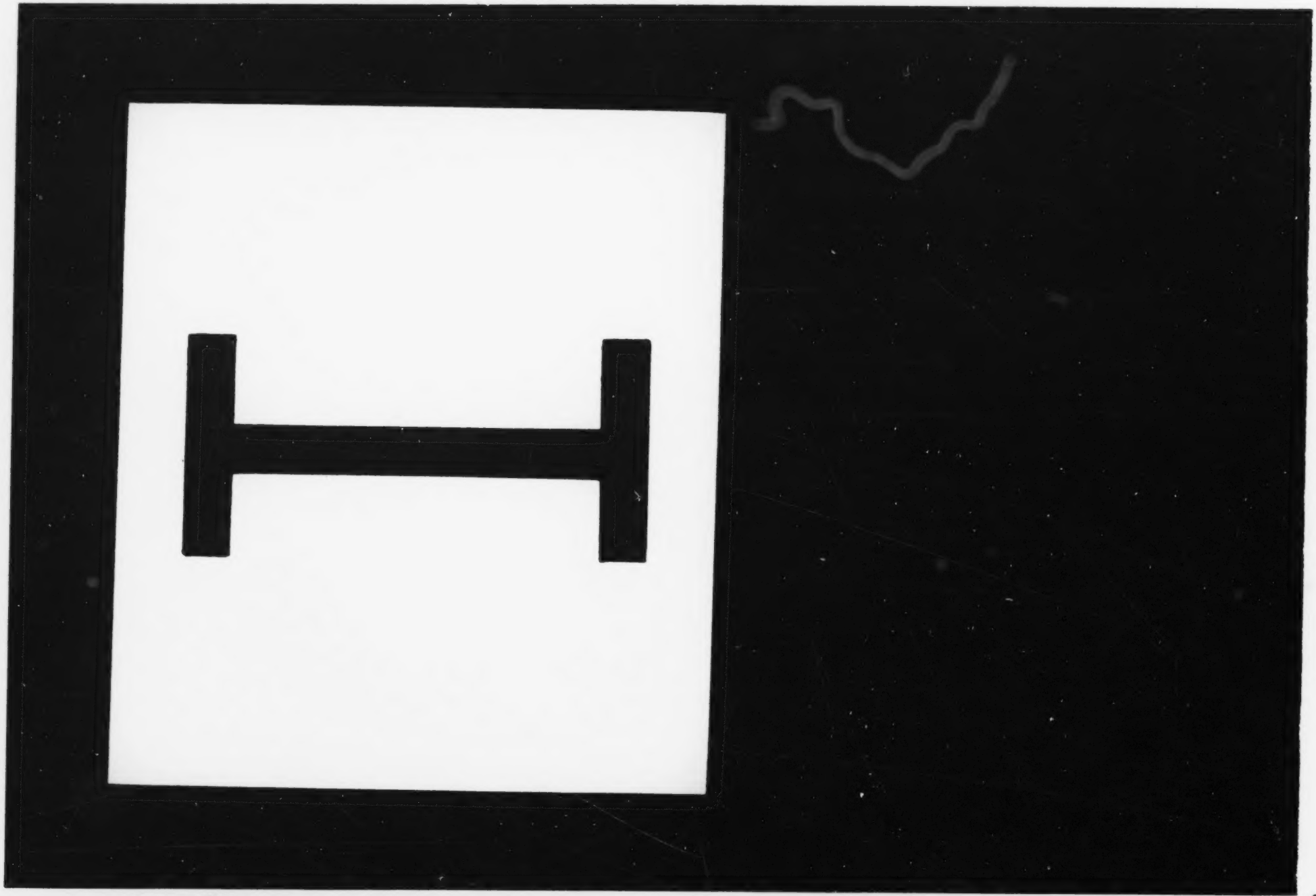

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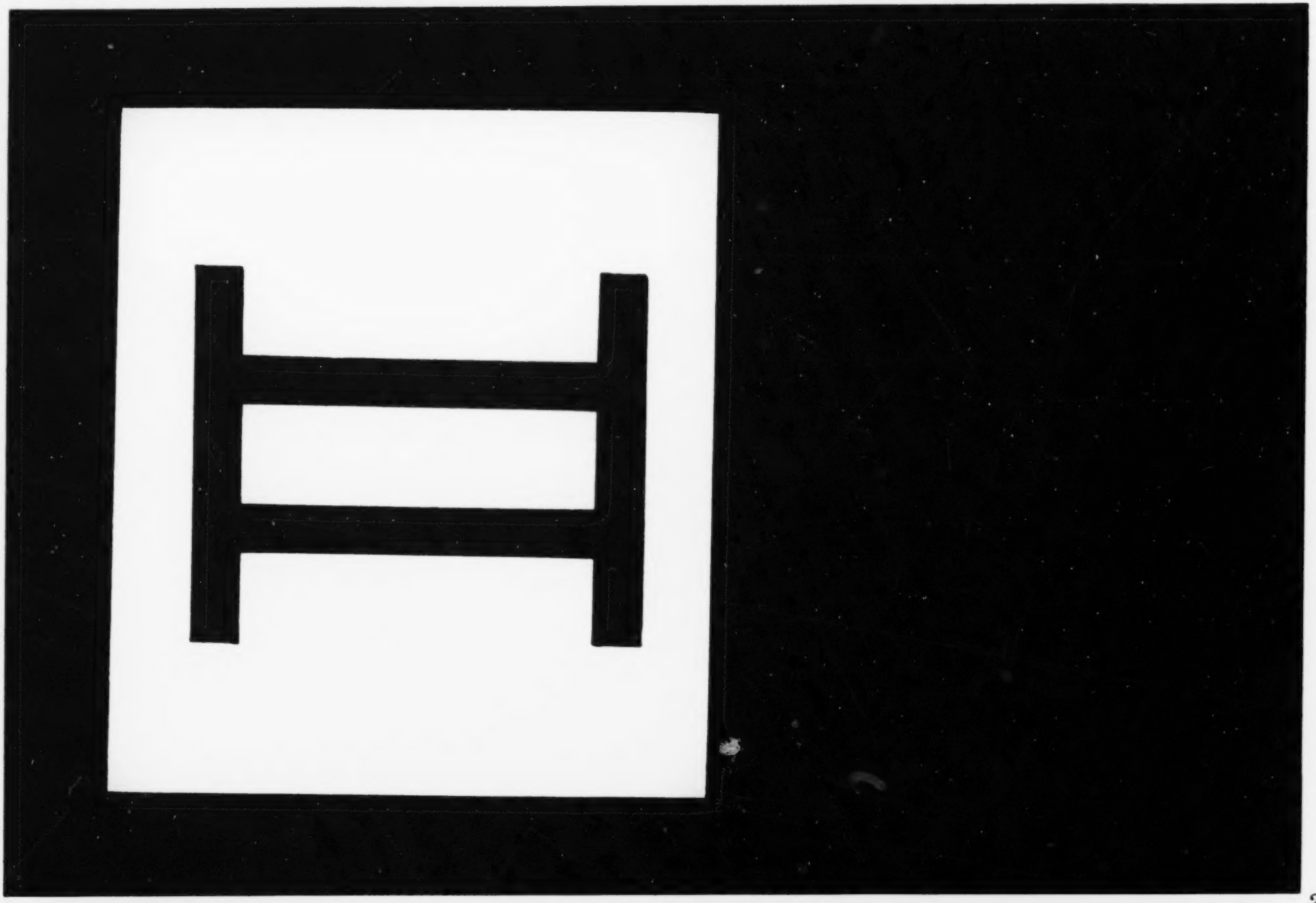

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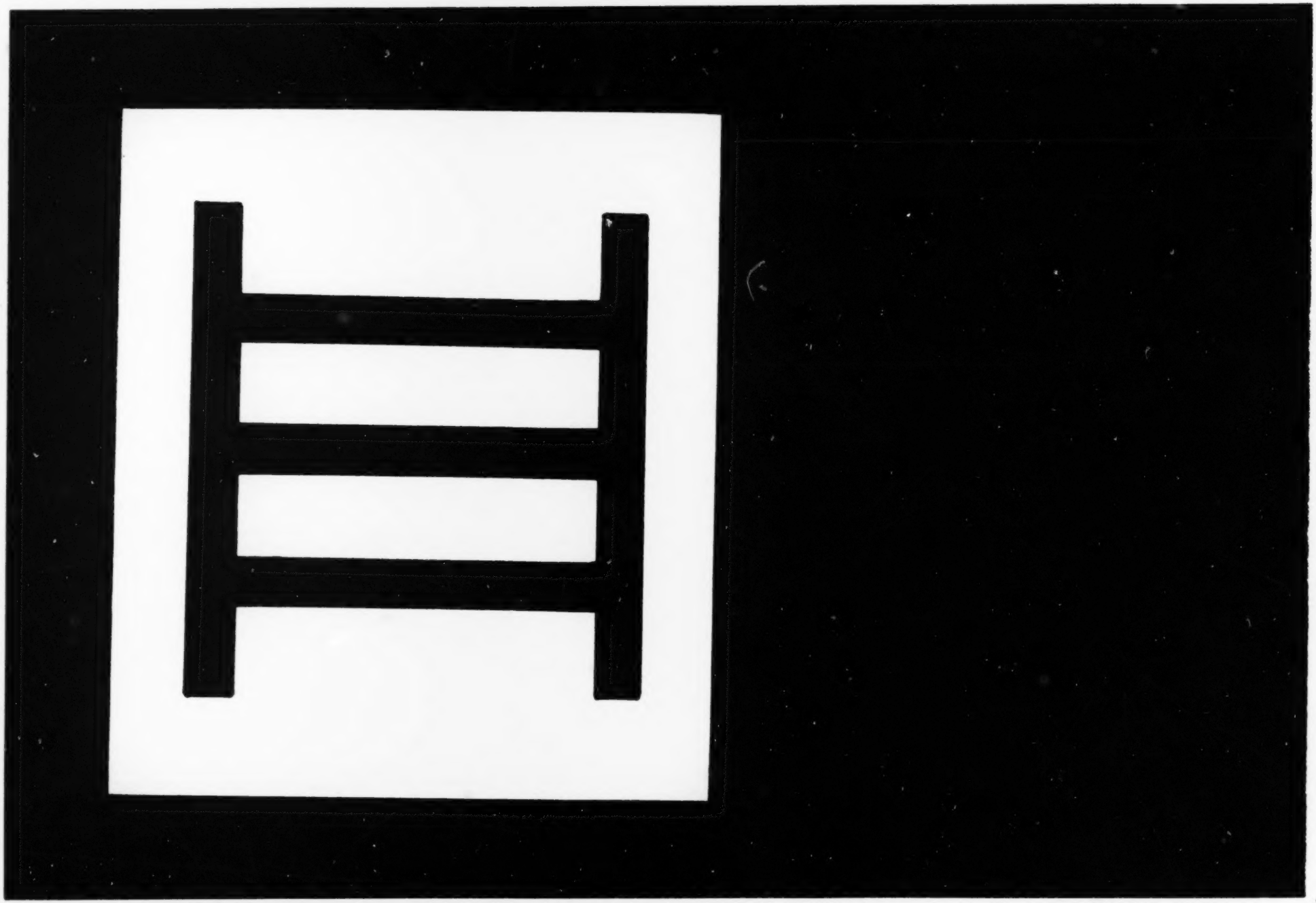

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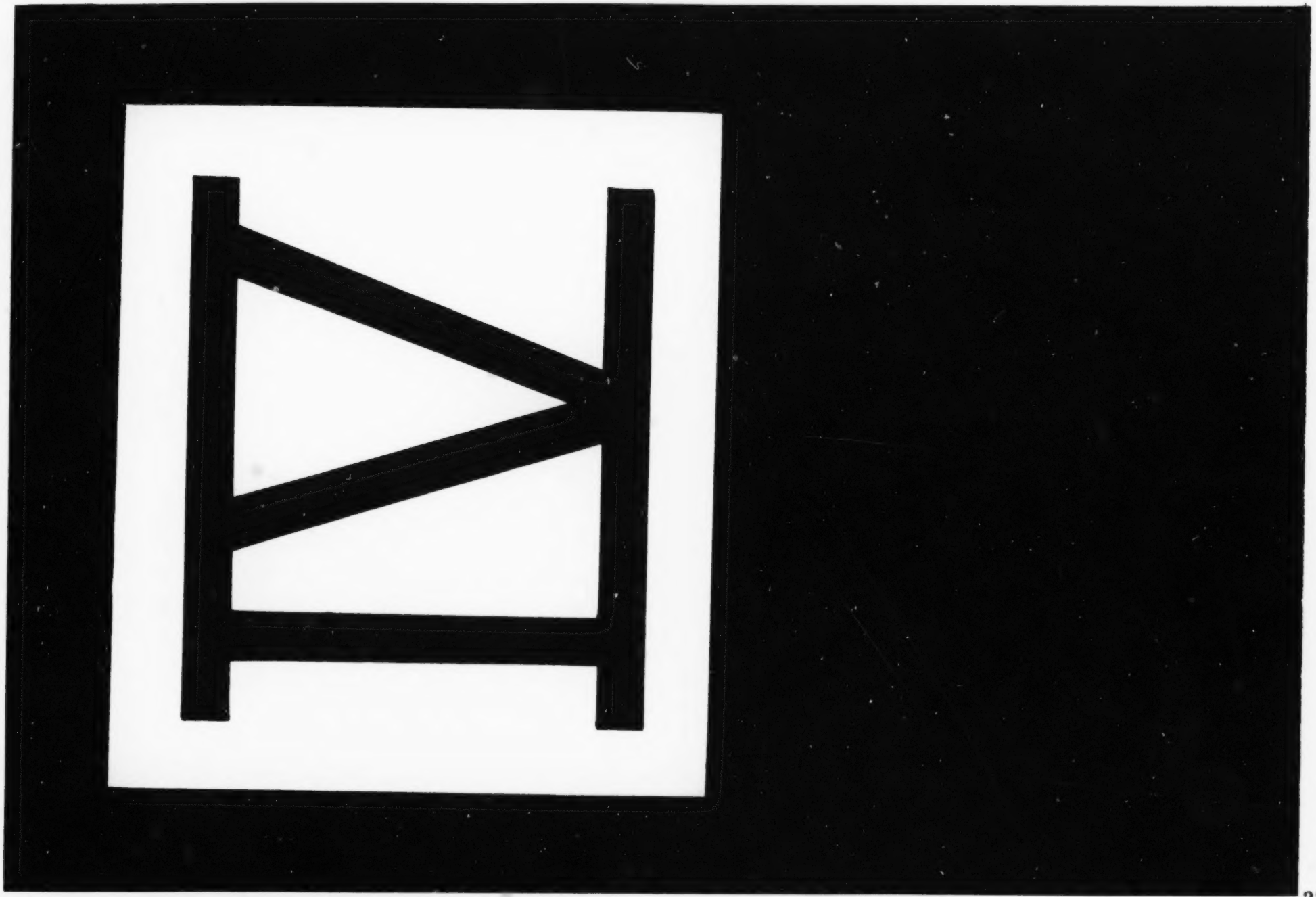

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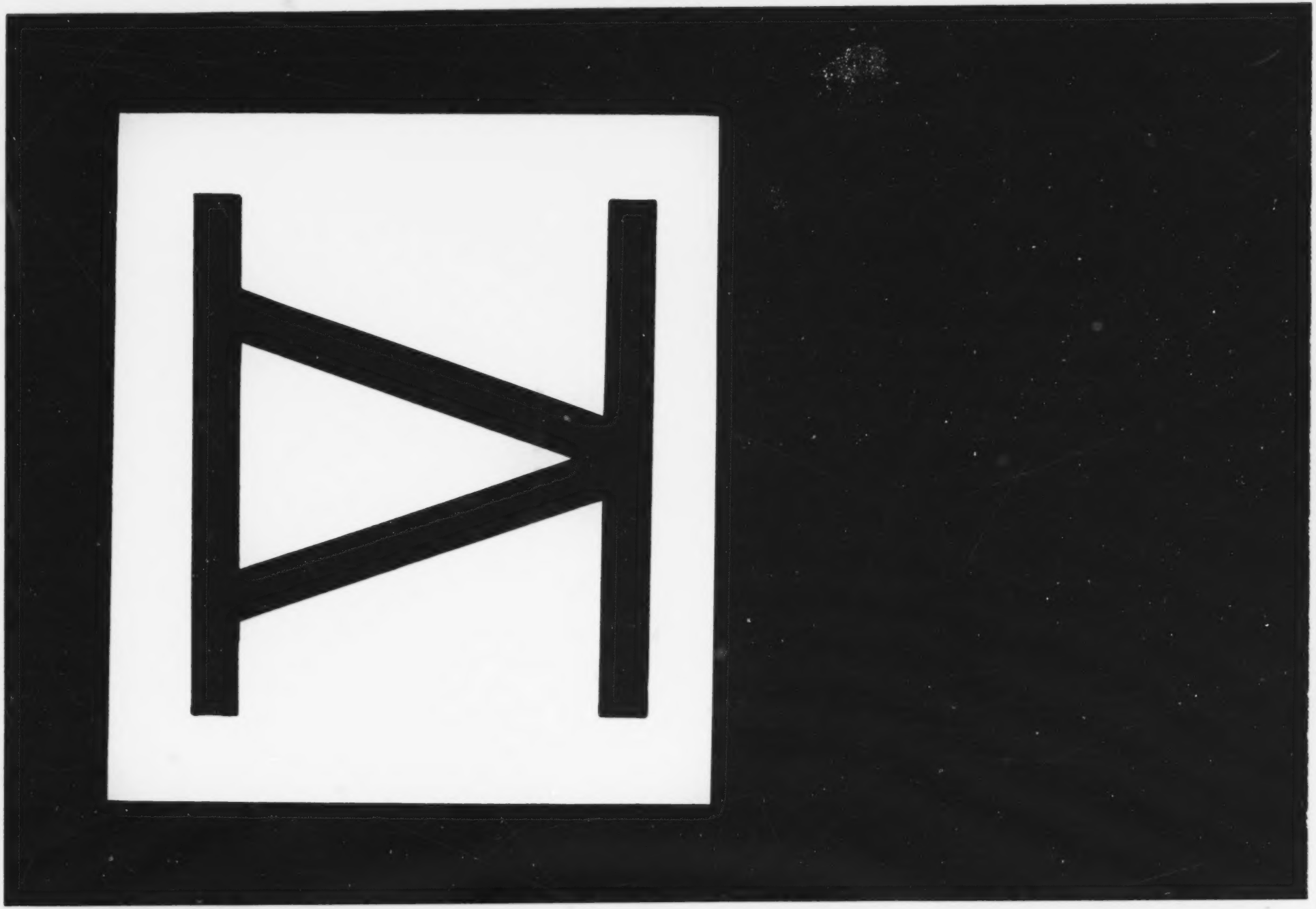

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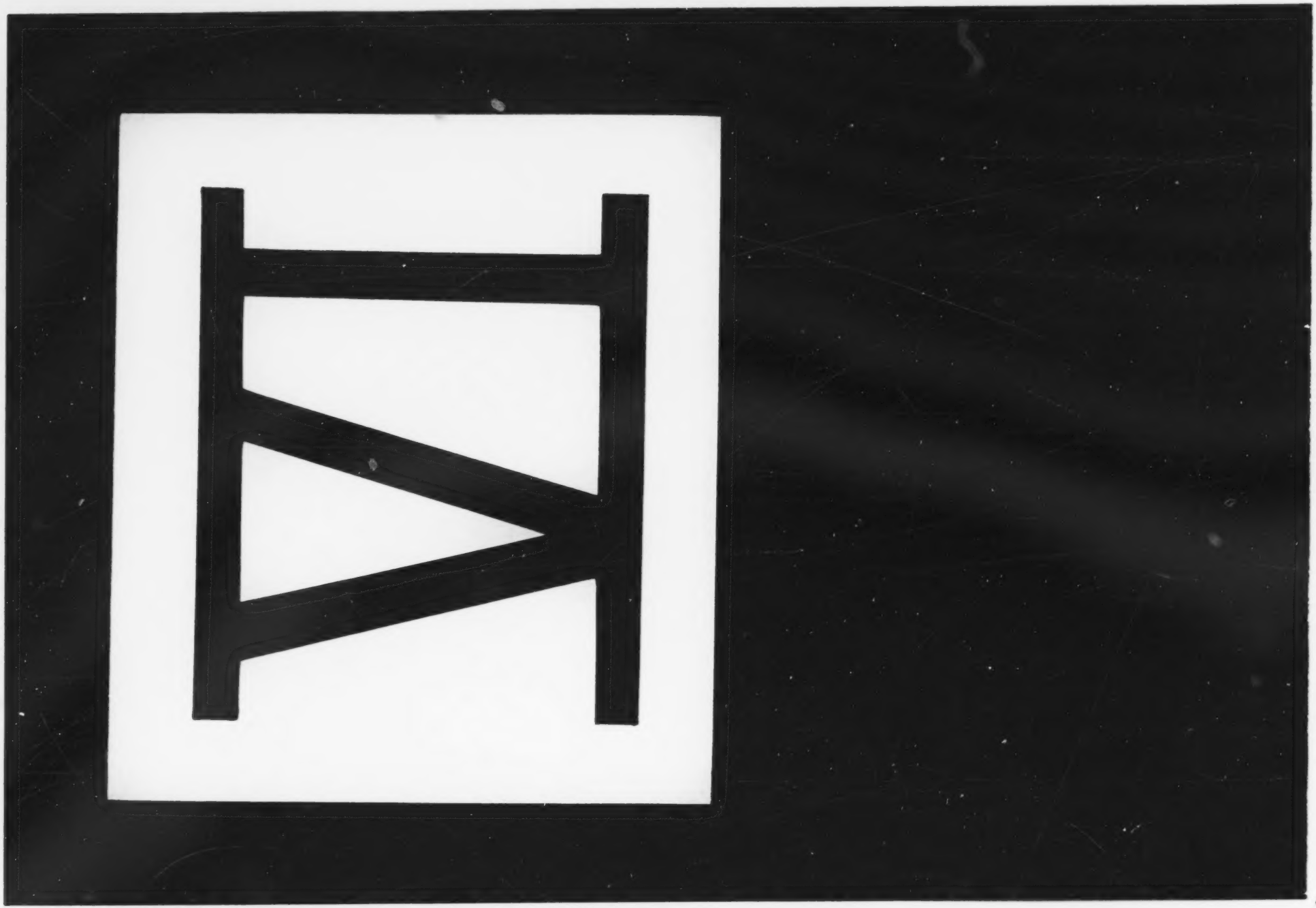

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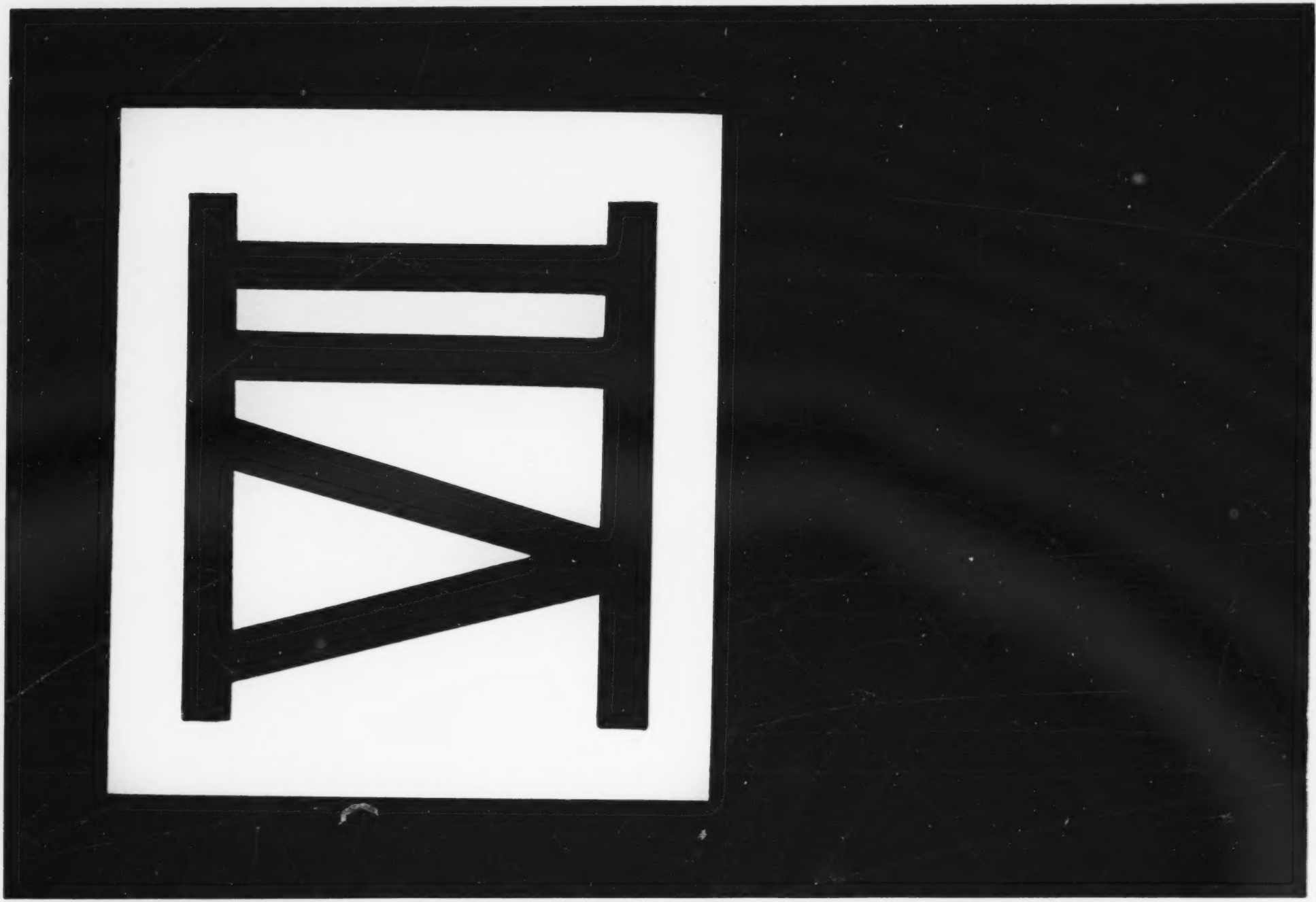

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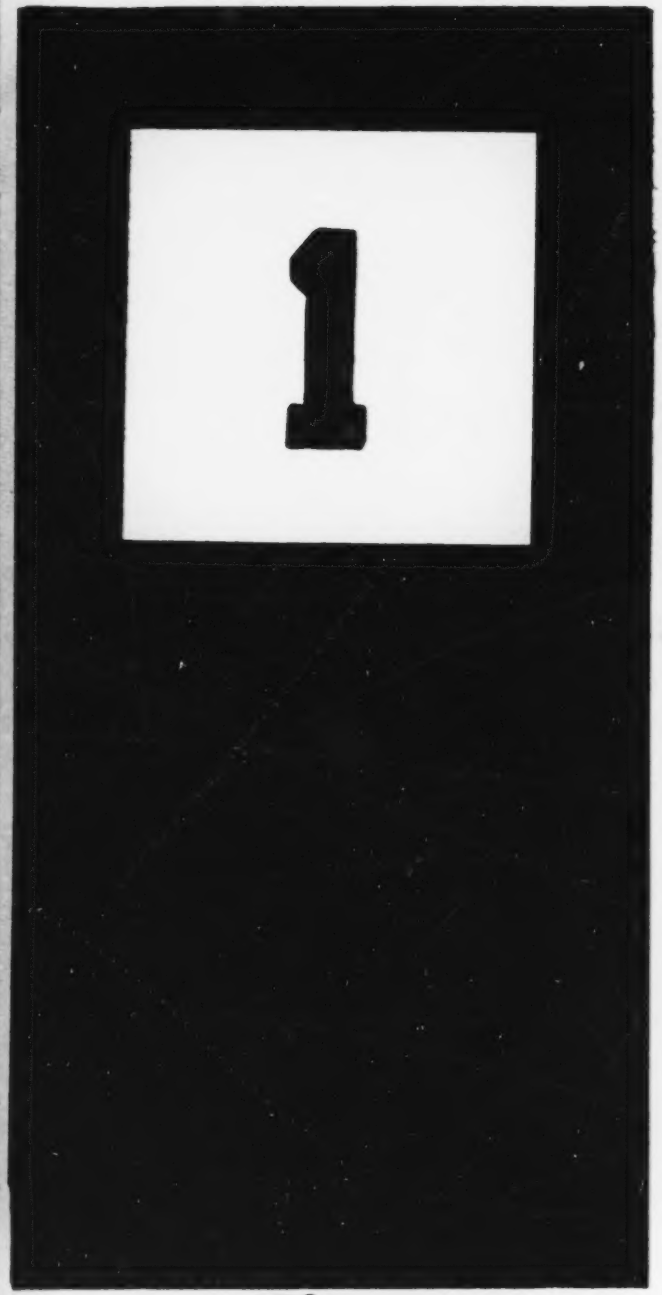

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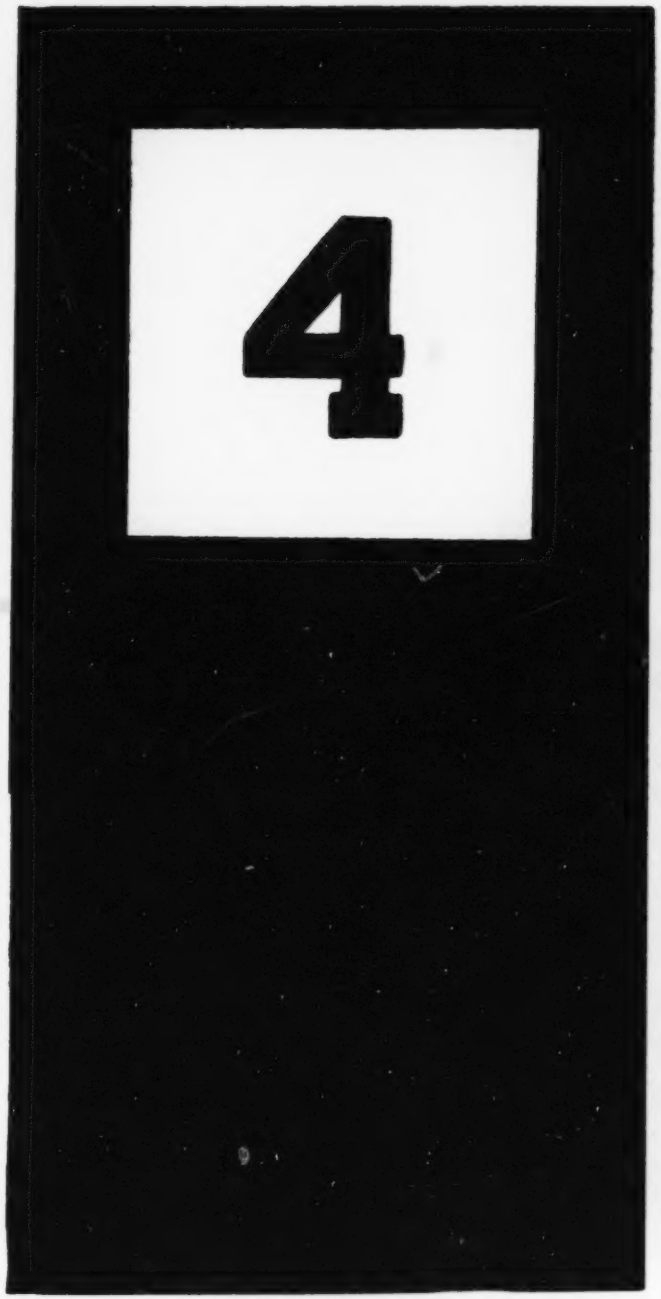
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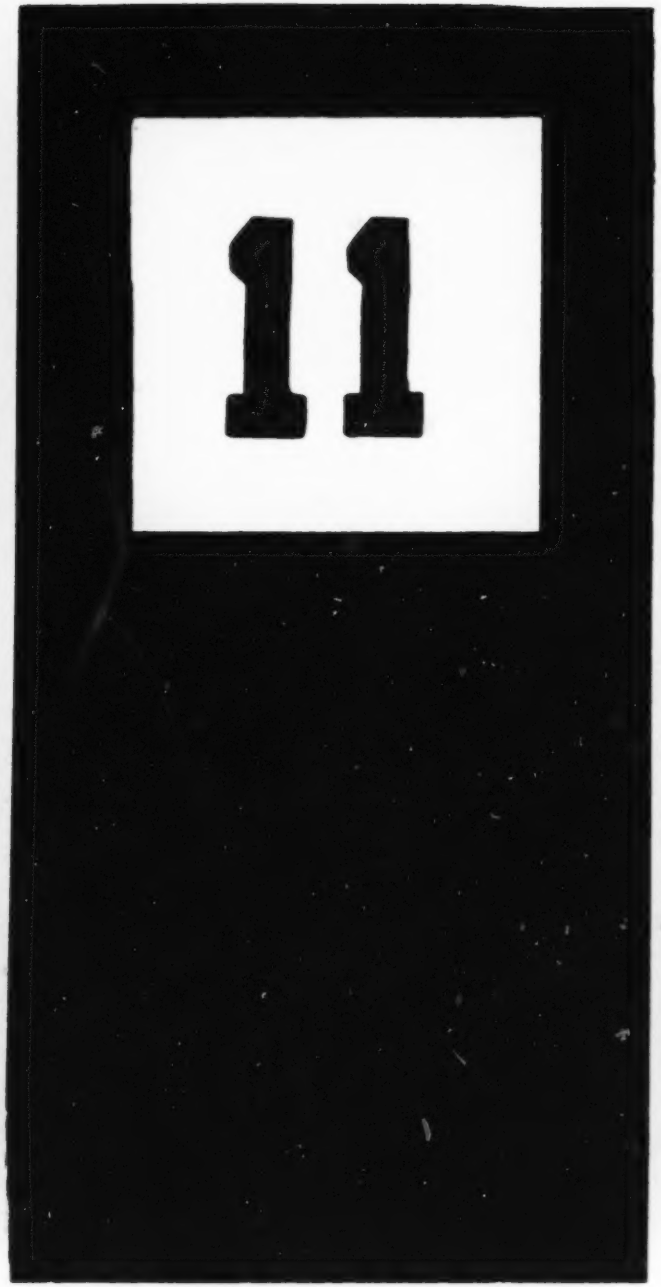
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Cut out and mount on poster board.

CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES PREAMBLE

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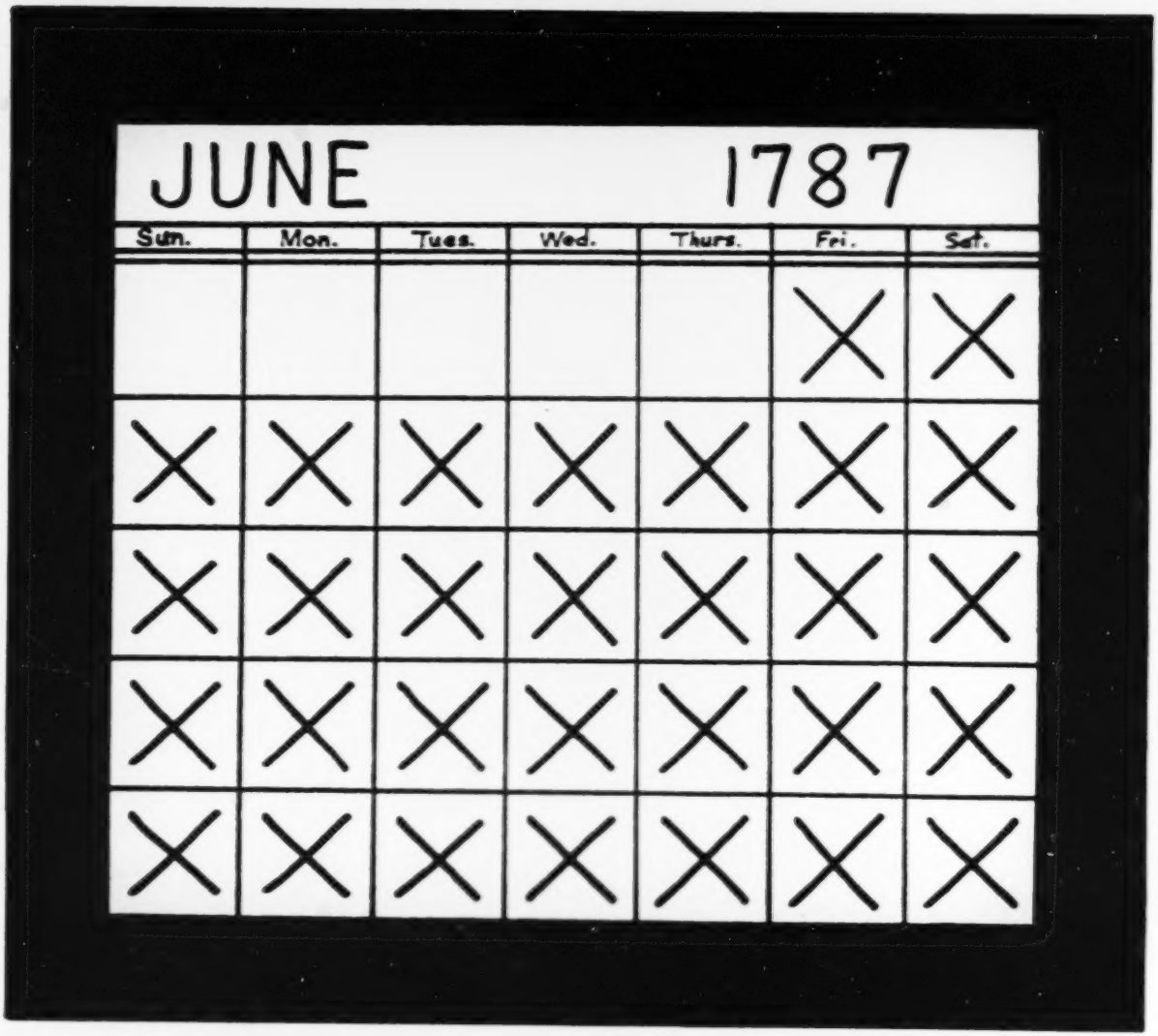
Cut out and mount on poster board.

U. S. CONSTITUTION

MAY 25, 1787, TO SEPTEMBER 17, 1787.

MAY 1787
Sun. Mon. Tues. Wed. Thurs. Fri. Sat.
1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8 9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16 17 18 19
20 21 22 23 24 X X
X X X X X


JUNE 1787
Sun.
Mon.
Tues.
Wed.
Thurs.
Fri.
Sat.

JULY
1787
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Thurs.
Fri.
Sat.

AUGUST 1787
Sun.
Mon.
Tues.
Wed.
Thurs.
Fri.
Sat.

SEPTEMBER 1787
Sun.
Mon.
Tues.
Wed.
Thurs.
Fri.
Sat.
18
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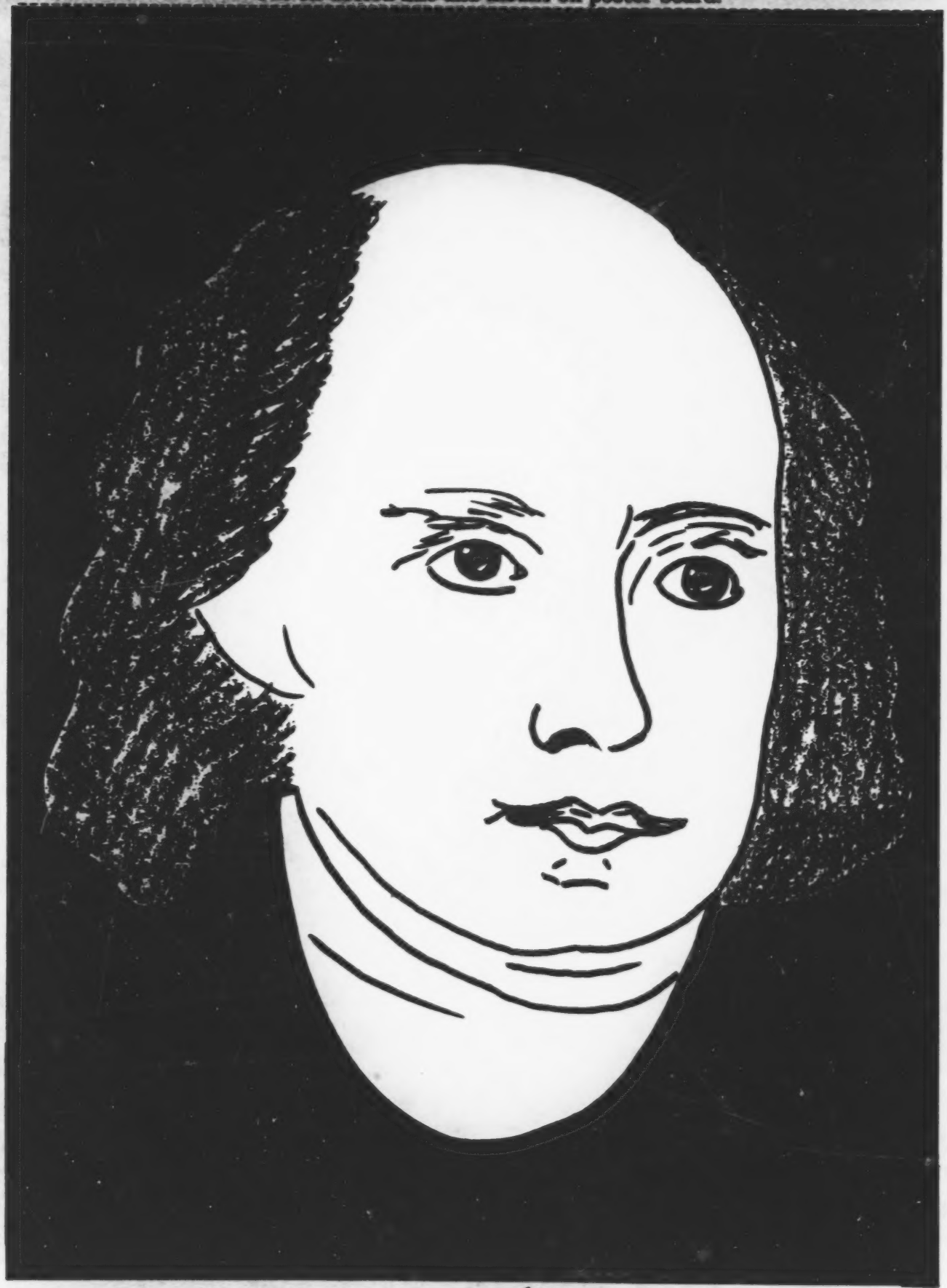
Cut out states and mount on poster board as shown below.

Cut on dotted line and mount on poster board.

Cut on dotted line and mount on poster board.



Cut on dotted line and mount on poster board.

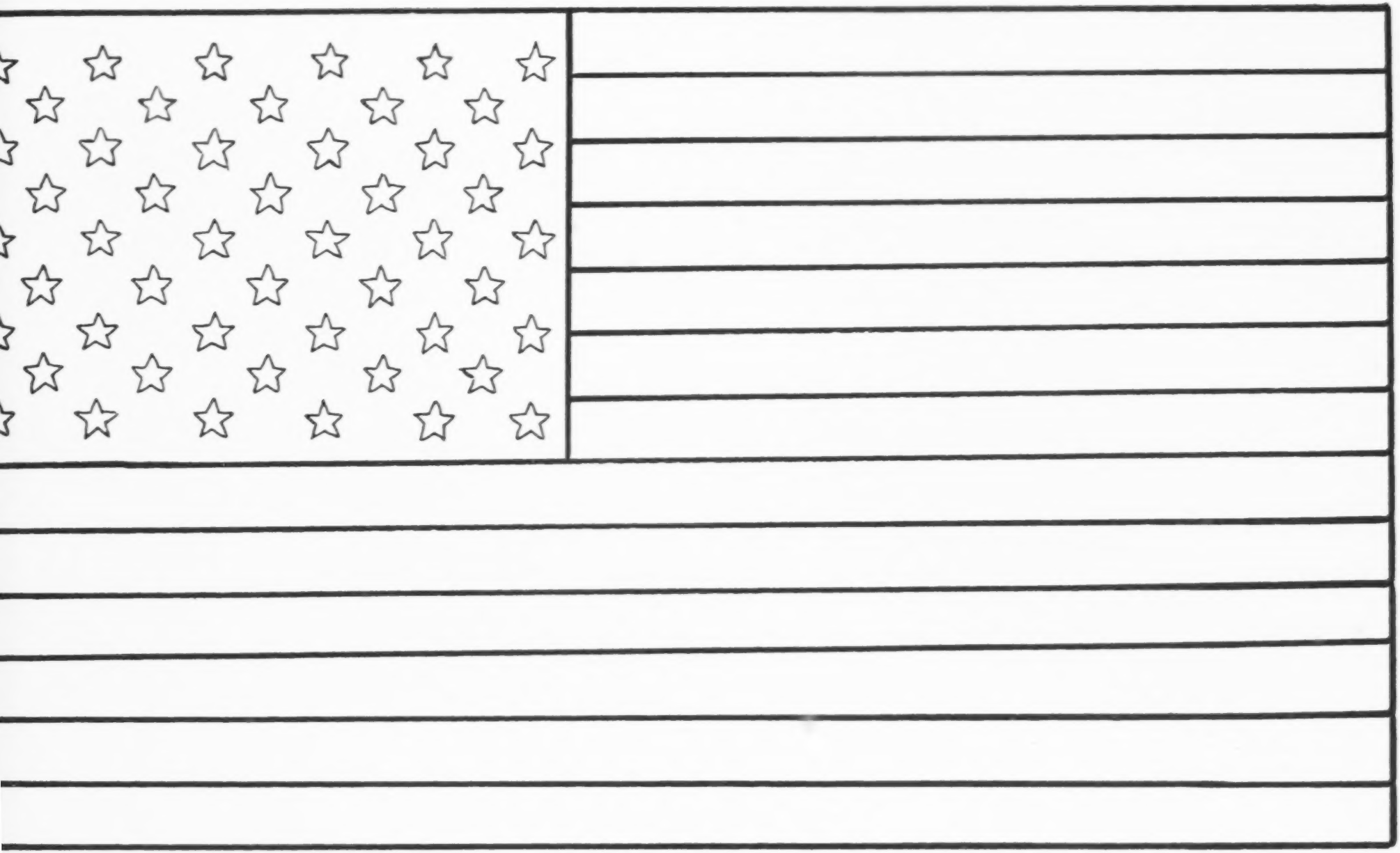
TO MAKE THE "BALANCE OF POWERS":

Use 3 rulers, taped together to make the triangle; suspend triangle with 3 strings. Use string to hang 3 cups that weigh the same. Use ribbon or strips of paper with one end taped inside each cup.

Policeman's Hat:
Attach to a headband as shown above.

81

Make copies of flag for children to color for flag parade.

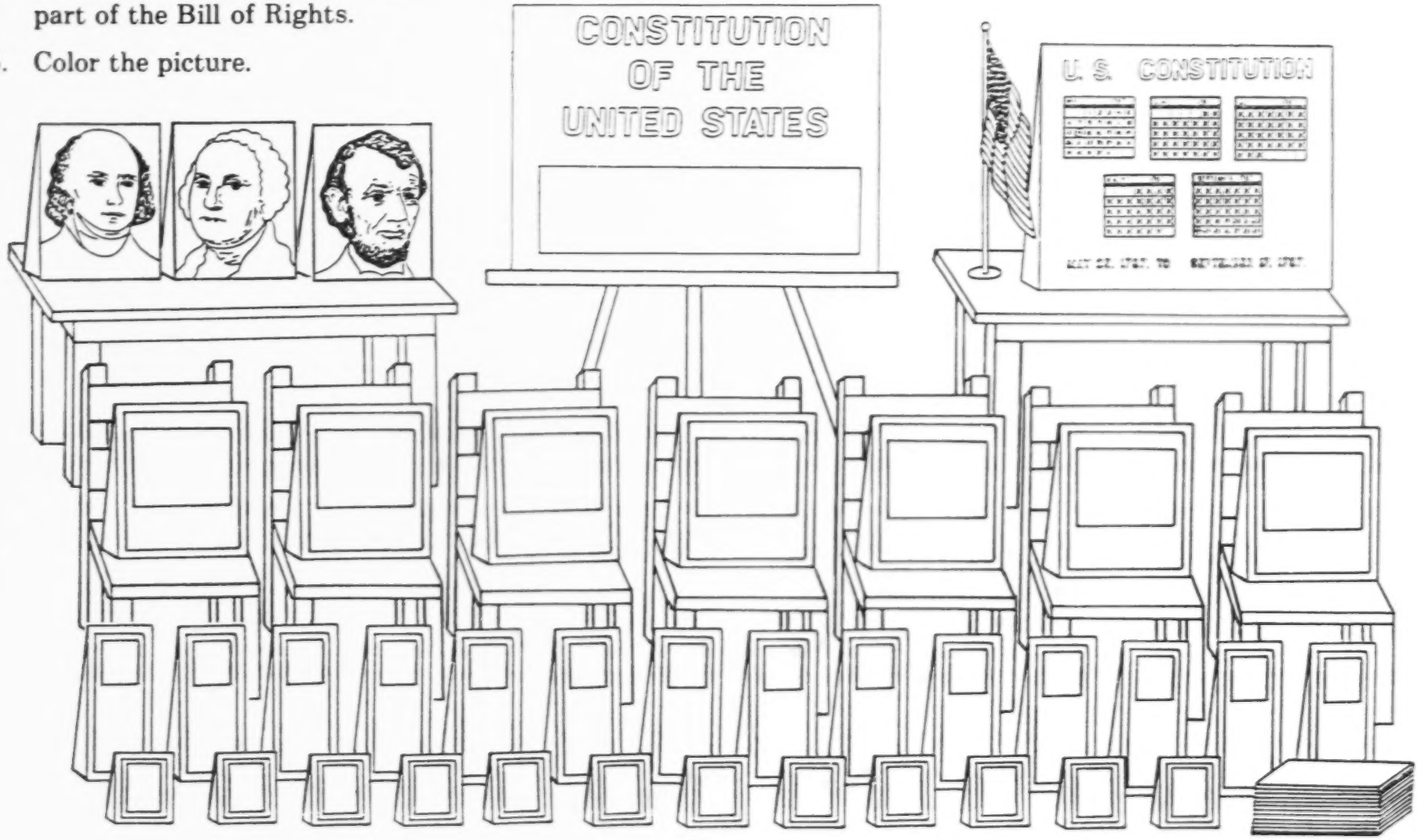


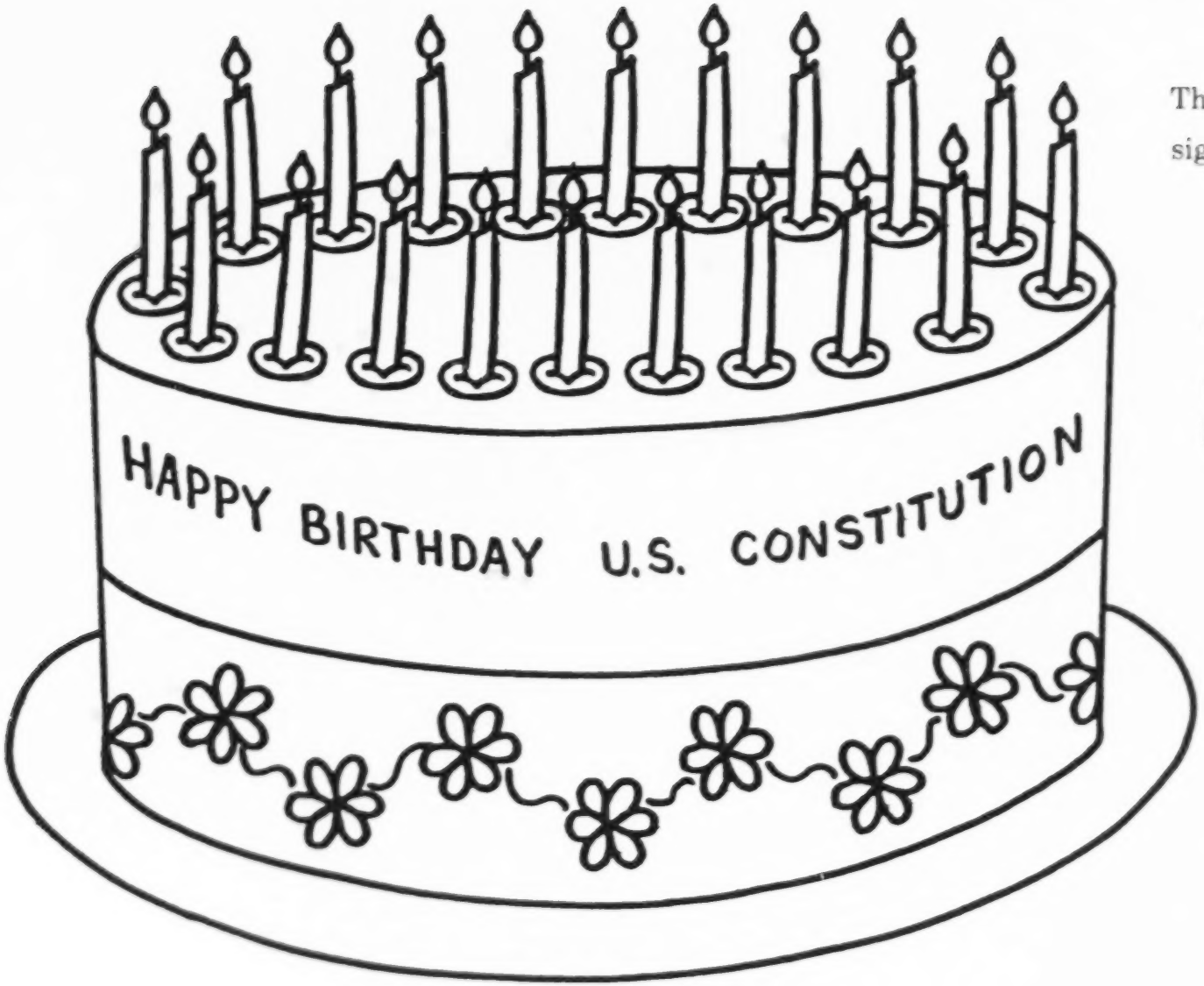
QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CONSTITUTION

1. About how long ago was the Constitution written?
2. Who was the President of the group of men who wrote the Constitution?
3. Who was called the "Father of the Constitution"?
4. About how long did it take to write the Constitution?
5. How many men came to the meeting to write the Constitution?
6. What is the first part of the Constitution?
7. How many articles are in the Constitution?
8. Name the three branches of our government.
9. Name the two parts of our Congress.
10. How do we get our Senators?
11. How do we get our Representatives?
12. How do we get our President?
13. When we make a change in our Constitution, what is it called?
14. How many men signed the Constitution?
15. How many amendments are there?
16. What are the first 10 amendments called?
17. What does the Bill of Rights say about religion?
18. What does the Bill of Rights say about speech?
19. What does the Bill of Rights say about what we write in newspapers and books?
20. What does the Bill of Rights say about putting people in jail?
21. What great change was made by the three amendments that were added soon after the Civil War?
22. Tell about the 18th Amendment and how it was changed by another amendment.
23. Tell about the amendment that helped women.
24. Can more amendments be written? How many?
25. Do the people of our country have a part in our government?

DIAGRAM OF THE CONSTITUTION

1. Write the word PREAMBLE on the poster.
2. Label the articles with Roman Numerals I to VII.
3. Write the numbers of the amendments on the cards.
4. Put an X on each card that is part of the Bill of Rights.
5. Color the picture.





Each candle represents 10 years.

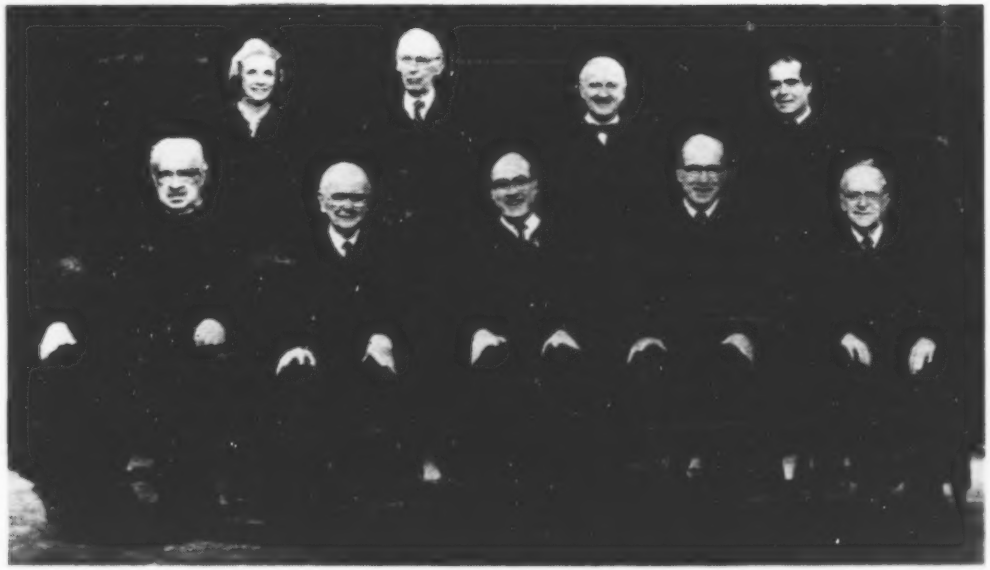
The Constitution was signed in 1787.

The Constitution was ratified, or approved, in 1788.

Make copies for the children to take home.

THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES

THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
THE SENATE
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
100 SENATORS
435 REPRESENTATIVES



THE JUDICIAL BRANCH
THE UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT
NINE JUSTICES

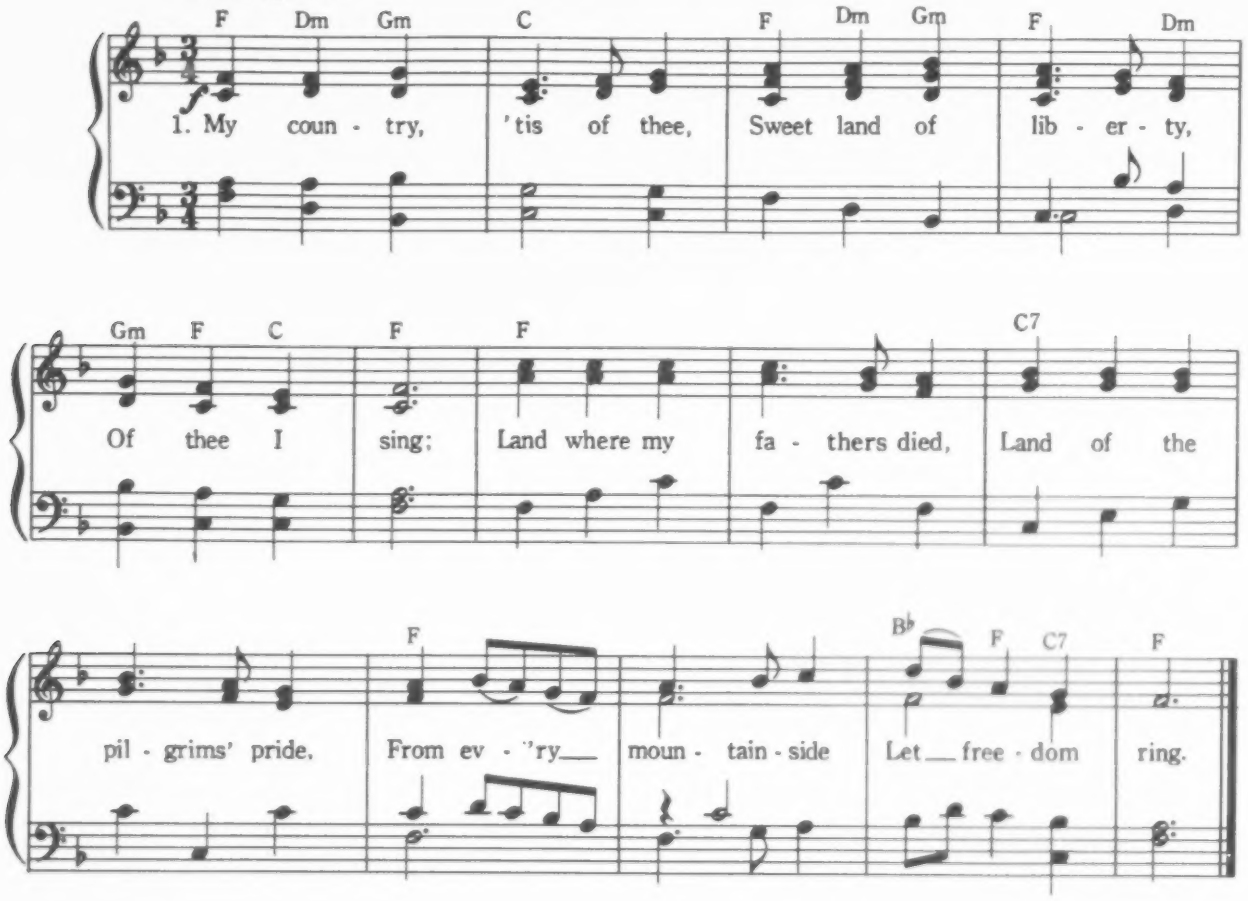
THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH
PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN

America

(My Country 'Tis Of Thee)

Words by
Samuel Francis Smith

Old English Air

With spirit

F Dm Gm C F Dm Gm F Dm
1. My coun - try, 'tis of thee, Sweet land of lib - er - ty,
Gm F C F F C7
Of thee I sing; Land where my fa - thers died, Land of the
F B♭ F C7 F
pil - grims' pride, From ev - 'ry moun - tain - side Let free - dom ring.

2. My native country, thee,
Land of the noble free,
Thy name I love:
I love thy rocks and rills
Thy woods and templed hills;
My heart with rapture thrills
Like that above.

3. Let music swell the breeze,
And ring from all the trees
Sweet freedom's song;
Let mortal tongues awake,
Let all that breathe partake,
Let rocks their silence break,
The sound prolong.

4. Our fathers' God, to thee,
Author of liberty,
To thee we sing;
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might,
Great God, our King.